MARVEL
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
THE AVENGERS
VOL. 1
ASSEMBLE
KURT BUSIEK • GEORGE PÉREZ
Waid • Ostrander • Chen • Kubert • Pacheco • Aucoin
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FAN-FAVORITE CREATORS KURT BUSIEK AND GEORGE PÉREZ USHER IN A NEW ERA FOR EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

Since the team's inception, the Avengers have always defended humanity against the forces of evil. When duty calls, these legendary champions answer, fighting valiantly until justice prevails. But what happens when their oldest foes strike directly at the team? On the eve of a huge Avengers gathering, an attack by the evil enchantress Morgan Le Fay sends these assembled heroes into a strange medieval reality where nothing is as it seems. Held under Le Fay's thrall, the Avengers have lost all memory of their true identities. Breaking free of Morgan's spell, Captain America and Hawkeye must fight to free their teammates before the Marvel Universe is altered forever! Plus: The Avengers take on the Kree and the Squadron Supreme!

Collecting *Avengers* 81-11

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Stan Lee Presents a New Era of Adventure & Daring for Earth's Mightiest Heroes!

ONCE AN AVENGER...

Al Vey inks

Richard Starkings & Comicraft/VF letters

Kurt Busiek & George Pérez

Bob Harras editor in chief

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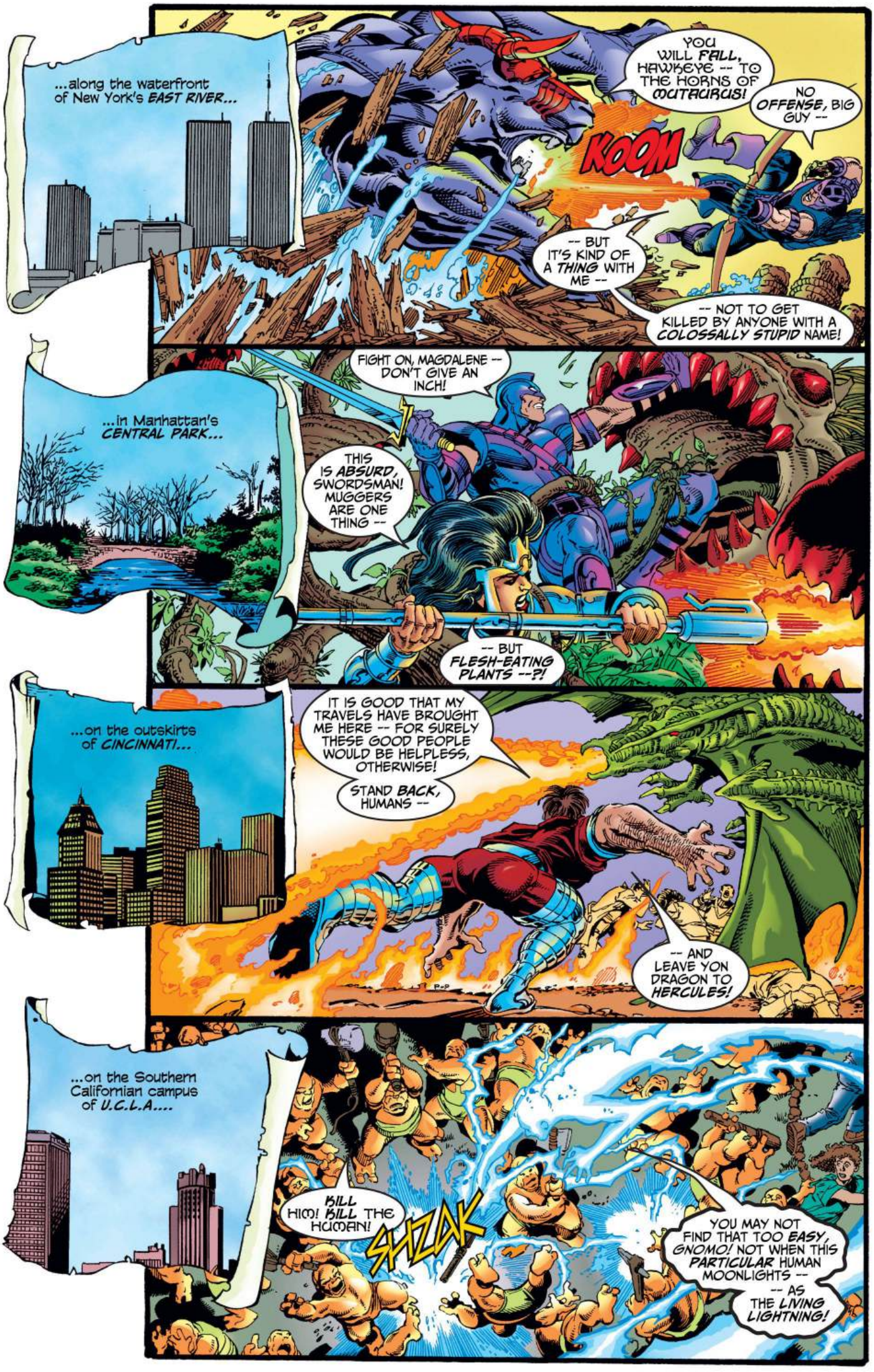
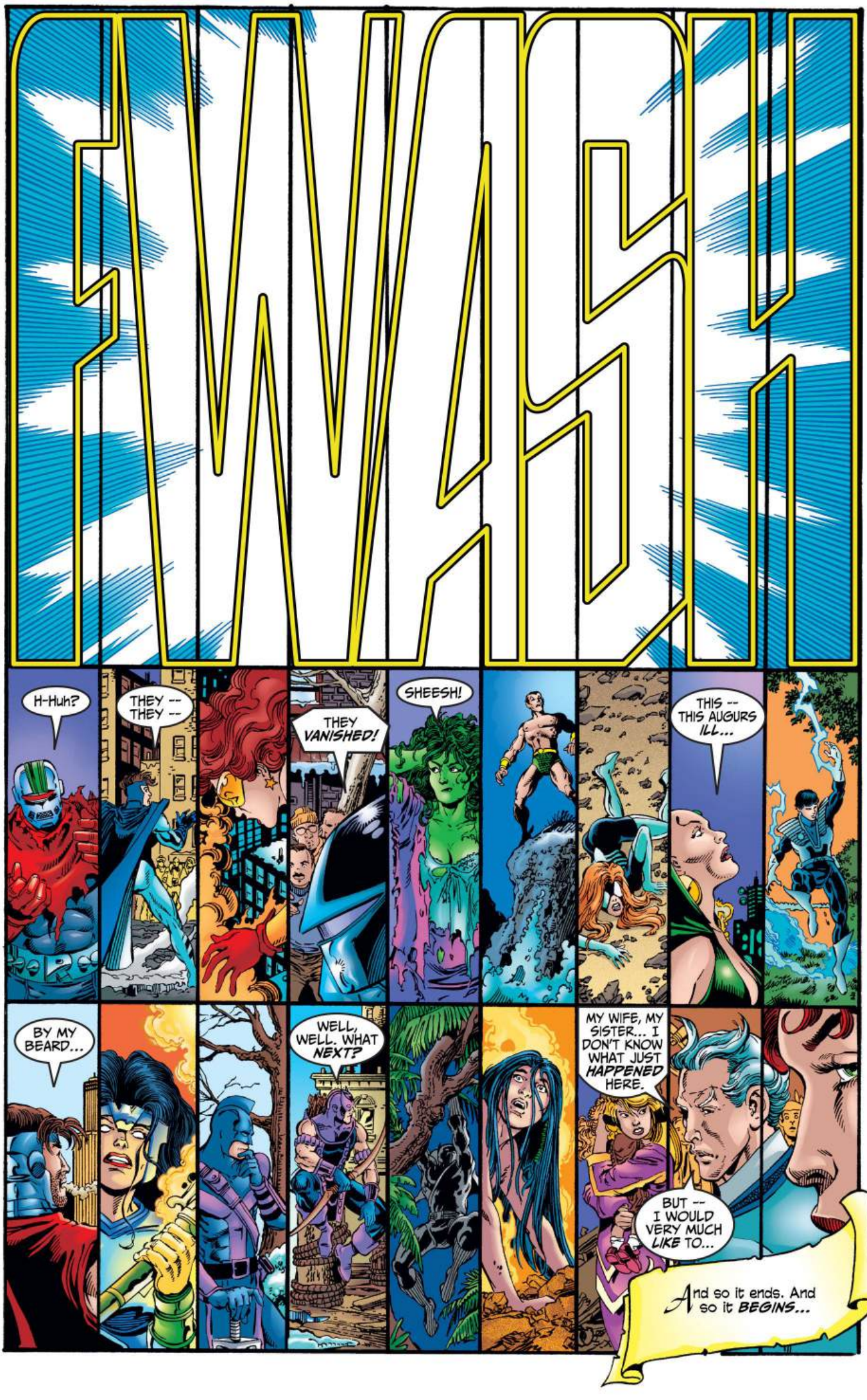
Prologue:
In CAFE TRANSIA, a Slavic Restaurant nestled into a sidestreet in one of Manhattan's Eastern European Communities...
THE NERVE OF THAT CLERK!
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HELPING YOU!
BUT HE MADE US WAIT FOR AGES... IN THE WRONG LINE!
Trar
TYROLEAN CUISINE
AND THEN HIS MANNER --
REALLY, BROTHER -- IT'S NOT THAT SERIOUS.
WHY, YOU'D THINK YOU WEREN'T EVEN HAPPY THAT YOUR WIFE AND SISTER HAVE RETURNED FROM SEEMING DEATH!
SST, PIETRO! THE BABY...
THERE'S LEGAL RED TAPE TO BE DEALT WITH DUE TO OUR RETURN. THAT'S UNAVOIDABLE.
BUT CAN'T WE JUST ENJOY THIS DINNER IN PEACE?
VERY WELL, CRYSTAL. FOR YOU, I SHALL --
EEK!
MOMMY! DADDY! AUN'IE WANDA!
WHAT IS IT, LUNA?
KSSSSSSSH
QUICKSILVER! CRYSTAL! SCARLET WITCH! WE ARE THE FLYING TROLLS OF THRYHEM, AVENGERS --
-- AND WE ARE YOUR DEATH!
So it BEGINS...

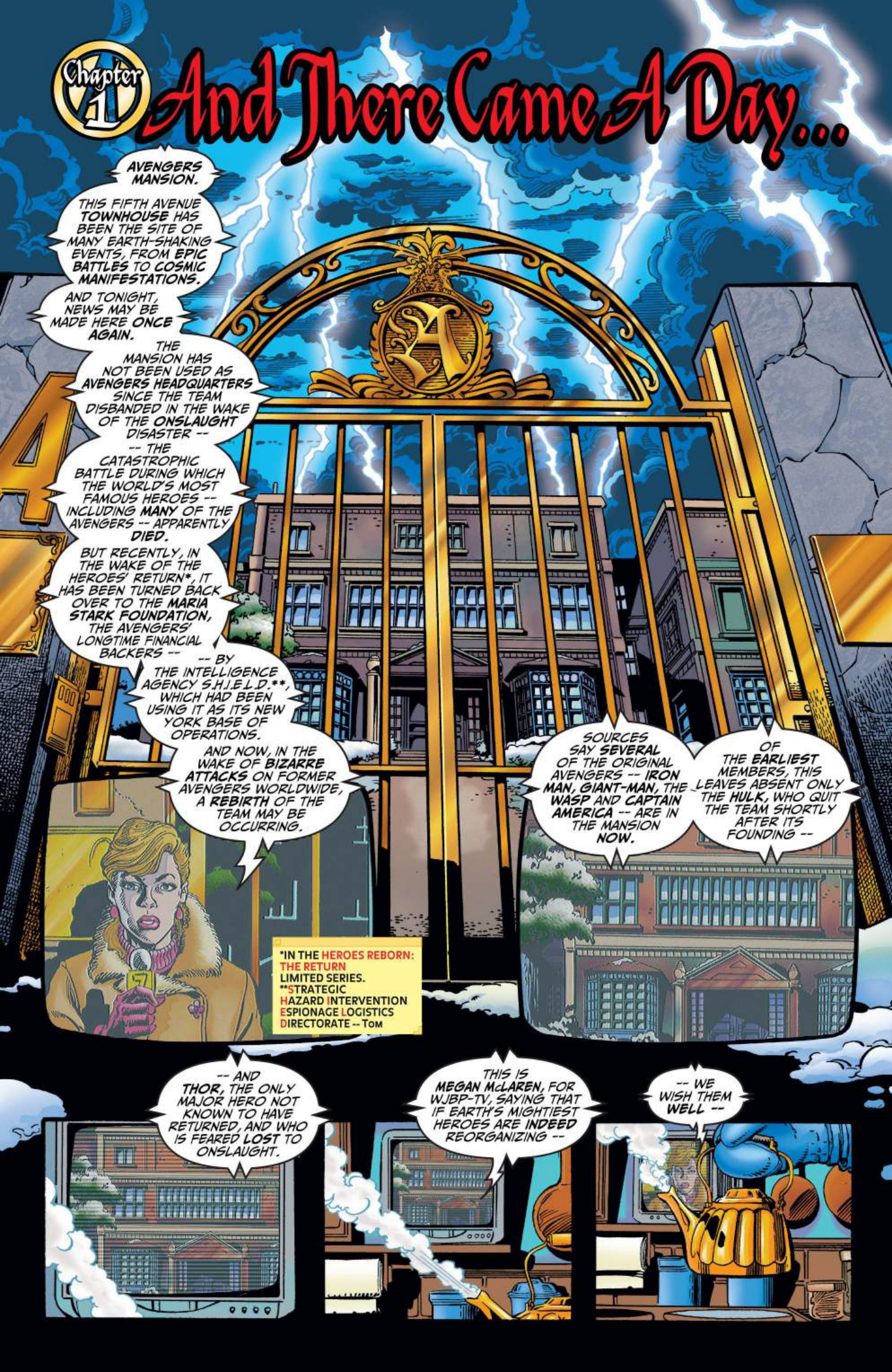
...but it is not confined to NEW YORK. For, near ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico...
HOLA, CARLOS!
HELLO, BONITA! AND WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR TINY PARISH?
Oh, NOT MUCH --
-- I COLLECTED SOME BLANKETS AND OLD CLOTHES FOR FATHER DIEGO TO --
-- Eh? THE -- THE GROUND?
MADRE DE DIOS! SOME SORT OF MONSTERS!
AND THEIR MOUTHS GAPE WIDE --
-- BUT THEY SAY NOTHING! WELL, SILENT ONES -- YOU MAY HAVE CAPTURED BONITA JUAREZ --
-- BUT YOU WILL FIND THAT FIREBIRD IS MUCH HARDER TO HOLD!
...and, in the African Nation-state of WAKANDA...
THAT NOISE, MY KING! WHAT --?
I DO NOT KNOW, N'DELE! BUT I HEAR MORE --
-- THE BEAT OF GIANT, LEATHERY WINGS -- COMING CLOSER!
SKAAAAAA
SOME SORT OF -- BIRD-BEAST!
I KNOW NOT WHY YOU HAVE COME HERE, CREATURE, BUT THIS IS A WEDDING CELEBRATION -- AND YOU ARE NOT WELCOME!
SO SAYS T'CHALLA -- THE BLACK PANTHER!


...along the waterfront of New York's EAST RIVER...
YOU WILL FALL, HAWKEYE -- TO THE HORNS OF MOUTACRUS!
NO OFFENSE, BIG GUY --
KOOM
-- BUT IT'S KIND OF A THING WITH ME --
-- NOT TO GET KILLED BY ANYONE WITH A COLOSSALLY STUPID NAME!
...in Manhattan's CENTRAL PARK...
FIGHT ON, MAGDALENE -- DON'T GIVE AN INCH!
THIS IS ABSURD, SWORDSMAN! MUGGERS ARE ONE THING --
-- BUT FLESH-EATING PLANTS --?!
...on the outskirts of CINCINNATI...
IT IS GOOD THAT MY TRAVELS HAVE BROUGHT ME HERE -- FOR SURELY THESE GOOD PEOPLE WOULD BE HELPLESS, OTHERWISE!
STAND BACK, HUMANS --
-- AND LEAVE YON DRAGON TO HERCULES!
...on the Southern Californian campus of U.C.L.A....
KILL HIM! KILL THE HUMAN!
SHZAK
YOU MAY NOT FIND THAT TOO EASY, GNOMO! NOT WHEN THIS PARTICULAR HUMAN MOONLIGHTS --
-- AS THE LIVING LIGHTNING!

...in LAS VEGAS...
FOOLISH WOMAN! NO HUMAN CAN WITHSTAND GULLIN, THE BOAR-GOD!
PERHAPS NOT, BRAGGART! BUT AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN --
-- MOON-DRAGON IS FAR MORE THAN HUMAN!
...in DENVER...
WE ARE THE VANNA, SPIDER-WOMAN!
OURS IS THE POWER OF THE AIR!
AND YOU CAN DO NOTHING -- BUT DIE!
...off the HEBRIDES...
YOU ARE POWERFUL, GIANT -- AND YOU STINK OF SALT! BUT THAT WILL NOT HELP YOU --
--NOT AGAINST NAMOR THE SUB-MARINER -- THE AVENGING SON!
GEEZ, CAN'T A GIRL VISIT AN OLD LAW-SCHOOL CHUM WITHOUT GETTING INTO A BRAWL?
DO WHAT THOU WILT, SHE-HULK -- BUT DIE BENEATH THE HOOVES OF THE DEMON RIDERS!
...in SAN FRANCISCO...
DARKHAWK!
DARKHAWK!
WHAT'S GOING ON? THIS... THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
...in QUEENS...
JUSTICE! IT'S RAGE THEY'RE AFTER! WE'VE GOT TO --
YOU DON'T GOT TO NOTHIN', FIRESTAR! THESE CLOWNS AIN'T GETTIN' ME!
...and in the BRONX...

AND SO IT GOES...
...AS FORMER AVENGERS AROUND THE WORLD ARE SUDDENLY, INEXPLICABLY ATTACKED...
...AND THOUGH THEY BATTLE BRAVELY...
...THEIR FOES ARE BOTH NUMEROUS AND UNRELENTING...
...AND EVEN AVENGERS CAN TIRE, CAN BE OVERWHELMED...
...AND IN THE END...


AVATAR
H-Huh?
THEY -- THEY --
THEY VANISHED!
SHEESH!
THIS -- THIS AUGURS ILL...
BY MY BEARD...
WELL, WELL. WHAT NEXT?
MY WIFE, MY SISTER... I DON'T KNOW WHAT JUST HAPPENED HERE.
BUT -- I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO...
And so it ends. And so it BEGINS...


Chapter 1
And There Came A Day...
AVENGERS MANSION.
THIS FIFTH AVENUE TOWNHOUSE HAS BEEN THE SITE OF MANY EARTH-SHAKING EVENTS, FROM EPIC BATTLES TO COSMIC MANIFESTATIONS.
AND TONIGHT, NEWS MAY BE MADE HERE ONCE AGAIN.
THE MANSION HAS NOT BEEN USED AS AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS SINCE THE TEAM DISBANDED IN THE WAKE OF THE ONSLAUGHT DISASTER --
-- THE CATASTROPHIC BATTLE DURING WHICH THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS HEROES -- INCLUDING MANY OF THE AVENGERS -- APPARENTLY DIED.
BUT RECENTLY, IN THE WAKE OF THE HEROES' RETURN*, IT HAS BEEN TURNED BACK OVER TO THE MARIA STARK FOUNDATION, THE AVENGERS' LONGTIME FINANCIAL BACKERS --
-- BY THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY S.H.I.E.L.D.**, WHICH HAD BEEN USING IT AS ITS NEW YORK BASE OF OPERATIONS.
AND NOW, IN THE WAKE OF BIZARRE ATTACKS ON FORMER AVENGERS WORLDWIDE, A REBIRTH OF THE TEAM MAY BE OCCURRING.
SOURCES SAY SEVERAL OF THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS -- IRON MAN, GIANT-MAN, THE WASP AND CAPTAIN AMERICA -- ARE IN THE MANSION NOW.
OF THE EARLIEST MEMBERS, THIS LEAVES ABSENT ONLY THE HULK, WHO QUIT THE TEAM SHORTLY AFTER ITS FOUNDING --
*IN THE HEROES REBORN: THE RETURN LIMITED SERIES.
**STRATEGIC HAZARD INTERVENTION ESPIONAGE LOGISTICS DIRECTORATE -- Tom
-- AND THOR, THE ONLY MAJOR HERO NOT KNOWN TO HAVE RETURNED, AND WHO IS FEARED LOST TO ONSLAUGHT.
THIS IS MEGAN McLAREN, FOR WJBP-TV, SAYING THAT IF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES ARE INDEED REORGANIZING --
-- WE WISH THEM WELL --

THE STORM BUILDS, ITS WINDS WHISTLING AROUND THE OLD TOWNHOUSE, RATTLING ITS WINDOWS AND BATTERING AT ITS WALLS.
BUT THOSE WALLS ARE BRICK, BUILT AT A TIME WHEN THINGS WERE MADE TO LAST. THEY'VE STOOD FIRM AGAINST WORSE THAN THIS, AND WILL AGAIN.
THIS SEEMS OVERDUE, SOMEHOW -- WE'VE BEEN BACK FOR A WHILE, BUT IT TOOK THIS... SITUATION... TO BRING US TOGETHER.
AGREED, JAN. BUT WE'VE BEEN BUSY. I'VE BEEN IN COURT, REESTABLISHING MY IDENTITY --
AND I'VE BEEN OVERSEAS --
AND AS FOR HANK AND I, WELL --
-- THANK YOU, JARVIS --
-- WE'VE BEEN IN CAP D'ANTIBES, CATCHING UP ON THE YEARS WE SPENT APART --
TEA, SIR?
THANK YOU.
SIR?
THANKS, JARVIS.
NO TEA FOR ME, THANKS.
A LITTLE TOO HOT TO DRINK THROUGH A STRAW, I THINK.
SOME STORM. BUT TO BUSINESS -- ALL THESE ATTACKS ON AVENGERS --

THEY HAPPENED ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND INVOLVED ALL MANNER OF BIZARRE CREATURES -- BUT ONLY AVENGERS WERE ATTACKED --
-- AND THE CREATURES APPARENTLY VANISHED, ALL AT THE SAME TIME --
THE ATTACKS HAVE TO BE RELATED, GIANT-MAN. THERE'S NO WAY THAT --
OH, I'M SURE THEY'RE RELATED, CAP.
AS YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN FAIRLY FRIENDLY WITH THOR OVER THE YEARS, AND JUDGING FROM SOME OF HIS STORIES --
-- ALL OF THE ATTACKERS ARE ALMOST UNDOUBTEDLY ASGARDIAN.
THAT MEANS SOMETHING'S GOING ON -- PROBABLY SOMETHING BIG -- AND WE'RE COMPLETELY UNPREPARED.
I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW THAT COULD HAPPEN --
-- HOW THEY COULD HAVE JUST DISBANDED THE TEAM WHILE WE WERE MISSING --
-- AND I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY --
EASY, IRON MAN. THAT'S ANOTHER QUESTION FOR ANOTHER TIME.
RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH THE CURRENT PROBLEM -- FIGURE OUT HOW THOSE CREATURES HAVE COME TO EARTH, AND WHY THEY'RE HERE.
SOUNDS LIKE LOKI COULD BE THE --
WAIT. DO YOU HEAR THAT?
HEAR WHAT, CAP?
THE WIND --!
I HEAR IT, TOO -- IT'S BUILDING -- FAR BEYOND THE INTENSITY OF THE STORM, BEYOND NATURAL LIMITS --
TKSH
THY QUESTIONS HATH ANSWERS, AVENGERS --

-- BUT ANSWERS, I FEAR, THAT MAY RING A DEATHKNELL -- FOR MIDGARD, AND ALL OF LIFE THEREON!
AND THE WIND HOWLS INTO THE ROOM LIKE A LIVING CREATURE -- LIVING, HUNGRY AND WILD ...
THOR!
MY GOD, MAN...
MIDGARD? OH, RIGHT -- HE MEANS EARTH...
WHAT -- WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU --?

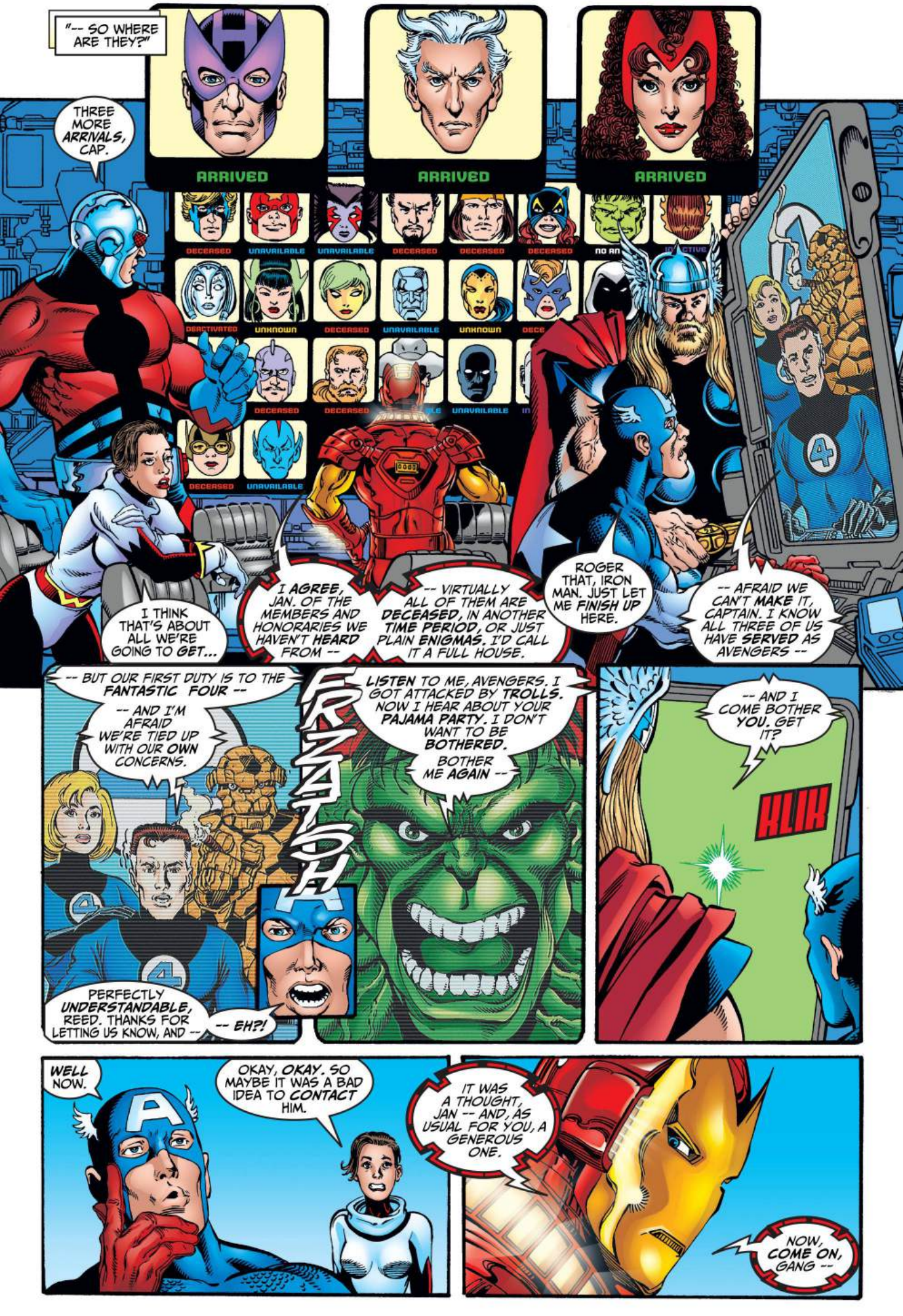
I...
...I HAVE TRAVELED FAR...
EASY -- EASY THERE, THUNDER GOD...
JUST RELAX...
JARVIS! BRING UP A FLAGON OF MEAD -- AND SOME OF THAT COLD MUTTON I SAW IN THE REFRIGERATOR!
THOR'S HERE -- AND HE LOOKS HALF-STARVED!
I THANK THEE, JANET...
...BUT FOOD IS THE LEAST OF MY CONCERNS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THOR?
ENOUGH! I CAN STAND -- I NEED NOT BE BODILY SUPPORTED, LIKE SOME ANCIENT, AILING CRONE!
THE WORLD DOTH FACE GREAT PERIL -- AND THE MIGHTY THOR SHALL NOT PROVE UNEQUAL TO THE CHALLENGE!
THAT'S THE SECOND TIME YOU'VE SAID THE EARTH'S IN TROUBLE, THOR. WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?
HELP? AYE, I DID COME HERE SEEKING AID -- SEEKING COMPANIONS WITH WHOM TO FACE THE COMING DARKNESS.
BUT -- THOU ART MORTALS. AND THE DANGER --
YOU LET US WORRY ABOUT THE DANGER, THOR. JUST TELL US WHAT TO DO.
I -- HAD NEAR FORGOT THY EASY COURAGE, CAPTAIN AMERICA. OR PERHAPS 'TIS MERELY MY GREAT WEARINESS.
AND THE REST --
-- THOU ALL SAYEST THE SAME?
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO ASK, FELLA. WE'RE AVENGERS, AREN'T WE?

WHATEVER THE THREAT -- WE'LL FACE IT TOGETHER.
THAT'S WHAT THIS TEAM IS FOR, RIGHT?
AYE. AYE, VERILY.
THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN --
-- AND THAT'S THE WAY IT'LL ALWAYS BE!
SIRS, MADAME WASP, I BROUGHT --
-- OH. OH, MY.
WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
A THREAT MOST DIRE, GOOD JARVIS. AN ENEMY TOO GREAT FOR ANY OF US -- AND YEA, TOO GREAT E'EN FOR WE FIVE TOGETHER!
ONCE MORE THEN, THE WORD MUST BE SPREAD, AND THE BATTLE-CLARION MUST BE SOUNDED.
IN EVERY CORNER OF MIDGARD, THEN -- AND THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES --
-- LET THE CRY RING OUT --

THSSSH
TNK
Chapter 2
"Avengers Assemble!"
WHOOOFF!
HAWKEYE THE MARKSMAN CAN'T HELP BUT LAUGH, AS HE GLIDES OVER FIFTH AVENUE.
THE WORLD MAY BE IN DANGER -- THE SHADOW OF DEATH LOOMING OVER INNOCENTS -- BUT HE STILL CAN'T HELP IT.
IT'S ONLY AT TIMES LIKE THESE -- WHEN THE CALL GOES OUT, WHEN HE GETS TO PIT MUSCLE, SINEW AND SKILL AGAINST ANY AND ALL THREATS --
-- THAT HE FEELS MOST TRULY ALIVE.
AND PERHAPS HE'S RIGHT TO LAUGH. FOR IF THERE'S A BETTER WAY TO FACE THE UNKNOWN THAN WITH A GRIN ON YOUR LIPS, READY TO SPIT IN ITS EYE --
-- HE'S NEVER KNOWN IT.
HEY, DOWN BELOW ME --

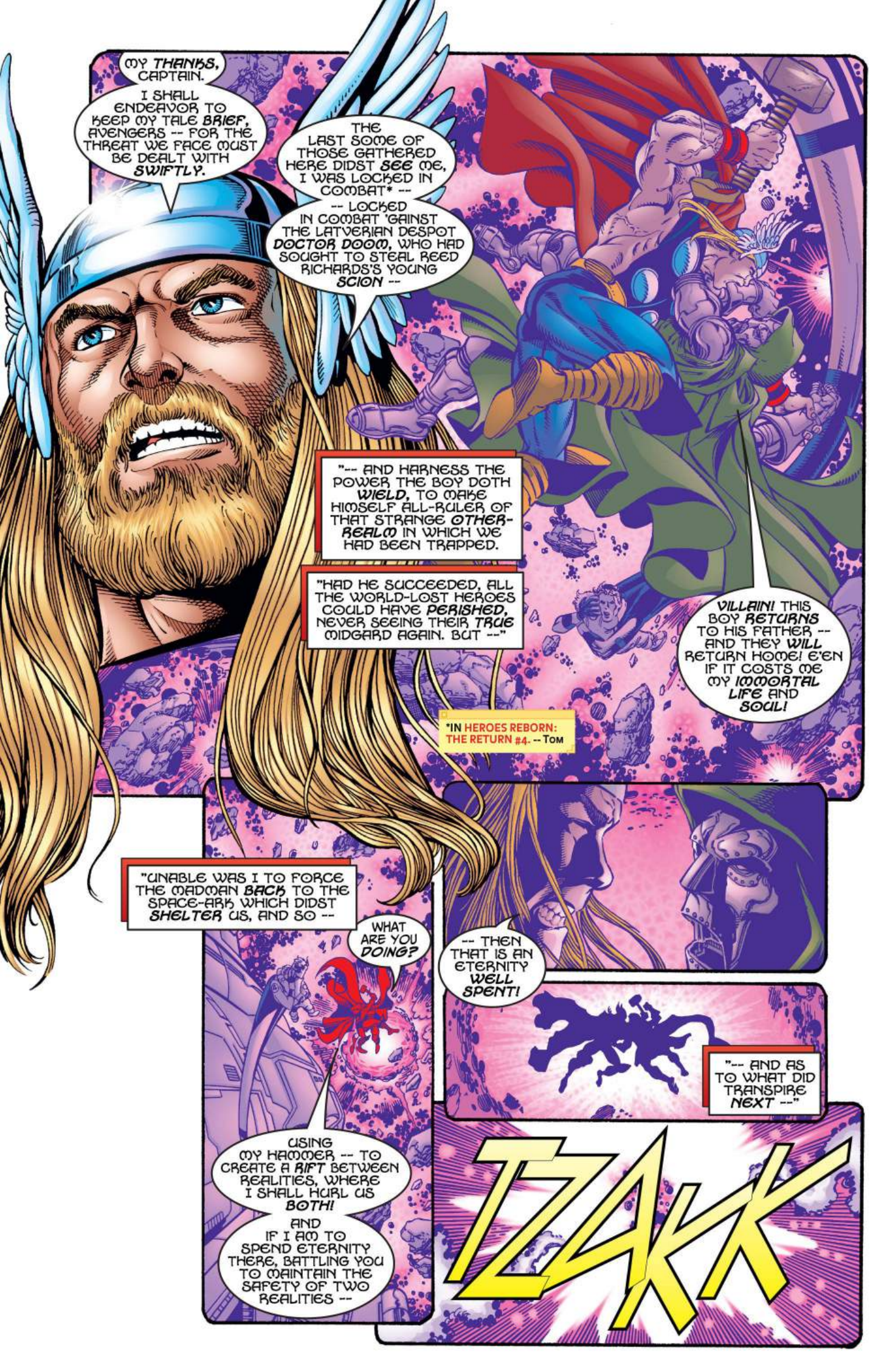
-- IF THAT CAB PULLING UP'S THE ONE I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF AROUND THE CORNER --
-- THEN I THINK I SAW --
-- HIYA, WITCHIE! HOW'S TRICKS?
HAWKEYE! HOW ARE YOU?
CHECKS CAB COMPANY
BACK FROM THE DEAD AND READY TO PARTY. AND I MUST SAY, YOU'RE LOOKING QUITE RAVISHING, AS ALWAYS.
AH, THANKS, I --
DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT HITTIN' ON YOU. I DO LEARN, SOMETIMES.
BUT HERE, LET ME --
HUH?
QUICKSILVER. STILL SHOWBOATIN', EH, PIETRO?
AW, YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS YOU DIDN'T GET TO GO.
WHY, YOU --
STILL TIRED OF WAITING FOR THOSE WHOSE MINDS MOVE AT A CRAWL, BARTON. I SEE YOUR TIME AWAY DIDN'T IMPROVE YOUR MANNERS.
SO, PIETRO! ISN'T CRYSTAL WITH YOU?
ALAS, NO. SHE HAD MORE LEGAL NICETIES TO ATTEND TO BEFORE THE MEETING, AND I COULD NOT BEAR TO GO. SHE'LL MEET US HERE.
CRYSTAL, TOO, HUH? WOW. IF THEY'RE CALLIN' IN FIRST-STRINGERS LIKE US --
-- THIS MUST BE SOMETHING BIG!
AH, MASTER HAWKEYE, MADAME WANDA, MASTER PIETRO -- YOU'RE HERE.
DO COME IN -- AND JOIN THE OTHERS.
"WHAT OTHERS," HAWKEYE STARTS TO SAY --

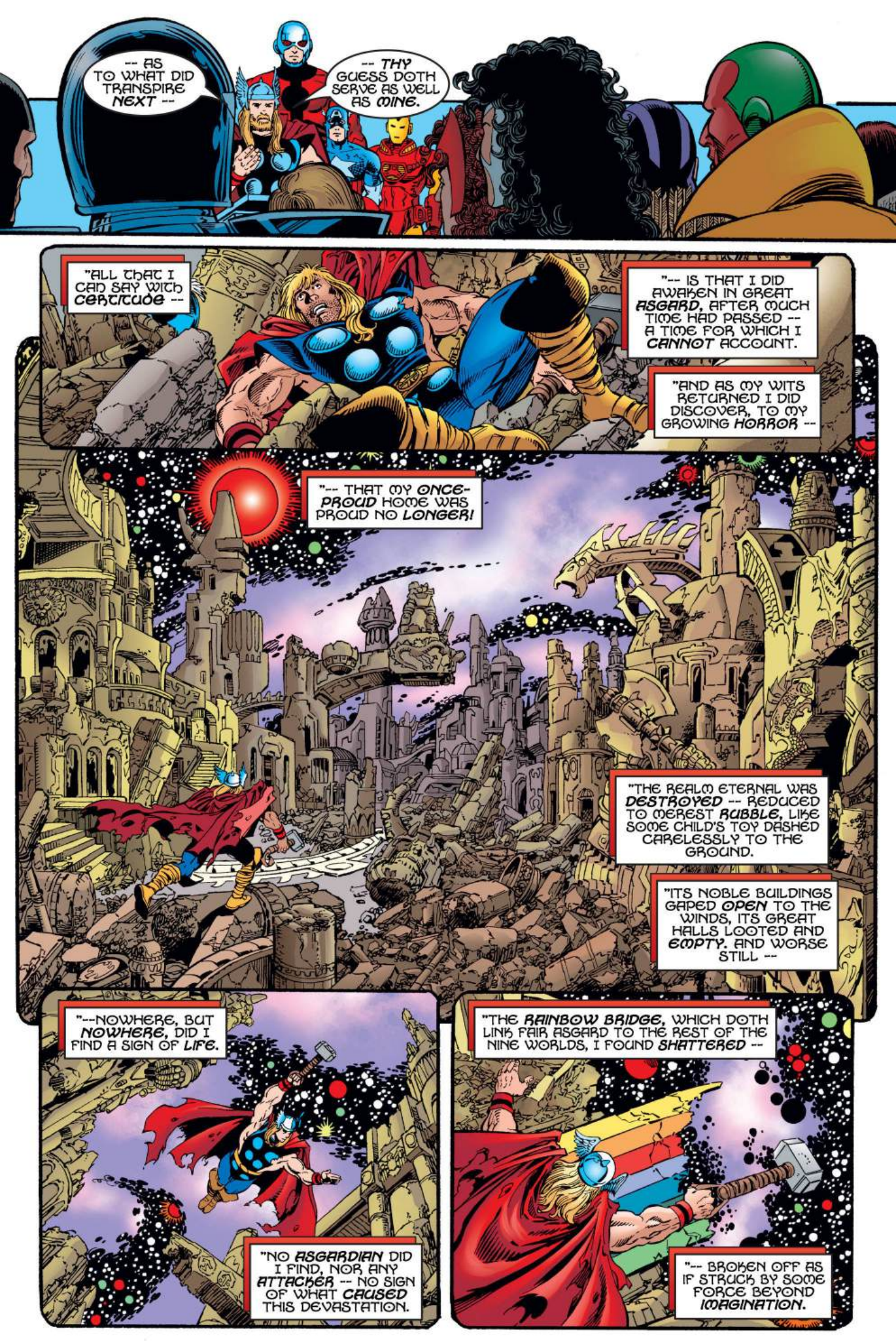
-- AND THEN THE WORDS DIE IN HIS THROAT...
HO, MY FRIENDS -- YOU ARE FINALLY HERE! WHAT SONGS SHALL BE SUNG OF THIS GATHERING TONIGHT, EH?
WHAT DEEDS SHALL BE DONE!
YOU WERE THE AVENGERS' LEADER, BLACK WIDOW --
-- MAY BE CRIPPLED, BUT RICK JONES WAS HERE AT THE START, AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO --
WHOA.
WELL, COLOR ME STUPID...
-- AND STILL MORE? HOW MANY AVENGERS ARE THERE, ANYWAY?
MORE THAN WE EVER HAD, THAT'S FOR SURE. BUT WITH ALL THE ATTACKS --
-- TO STEER IT AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE BY JABBING AT ITS EYES --
-- THAT STENCH?
-- A SHAME WAR MACHINE'S OUT OF THE BUSINESS --
-- LEFT MY DAUGHTER WITH A SITTER, SO I HOPE --
-- NOT SURE WE SHOULD BE HERE --
-- TIED UP WITH THE NEW BUSINESS, BUT WHEN THE AVENGERS CALL --
-- HAMMOND PASSED, BUT IF WE NEED THE HEROES FOR HIRE --
-- SAY THE PRESENCE MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED, AND VANGUARD --
-- OH, DEATHCRY SENDS HER REGARDS, BY THE WAY --
¡CASPITA! LOOK WHO JUST CAME IN!
SIMMER DOWN, MIGUEL. IT'S NICE TO SEE SO MANY OLD FRIENDS, BUT --
-- ALL THESE ATTACKS -- --:BRRR!:-- I KEEP JUMPING AT SHADOWS --
-- WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THESE ATTACKS?
I'D BETTER LEAVE THAT TO THE OTHERS, FALCON. I'M NOT SURE MY RECORD ENTITLES ME TO SPECULATE.
I AM MOST GLAD YOU THREE ARRIVED, SCARLET WITCH -- I DID BEGIN TO FEEL LIKE THE EARLIEST AVENGER HERE.
ALE?
AH, NO THANKS, HERCULES, NOT IF WE MIGHT BE GOING ON A MISSION.
NAMOR, I'M SURE THAT --
WELL, I AM NOT, PANTHER! THE SMELL ALONE --
JARVIS -- THAT CAN'T BE AN AVENGER, CAN IT?
OH, YES MA'AM. THAT'S D-MAN --
"-- HE WAS MADE AN AVENGER BY CAPTAIN AMERICA HIMSELF!"
AN X-MAN, PERHAPS -- THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN CHOOSY. BUT --
STANDARDS FALL, NAMOR. IT'S THE WAY OF THE UNIVERSE.
REALLY, RAGE -- MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST GO. IT WAS AVENGERS THEY CALLED FOR, AFTER ALL, AND --
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, VANCE. YOU TWO WERE ATTACKED ALONG WITH ME, RIGHT? IT'S COOL, HONEST.
REALLY, FIRESTAR, IT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
I'M BARELY AN AVENGER MYSELF, AFTER ALL. MAYBE YOU CAN HELP -- THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
NICE THREADS, CAROL. SO, IS IT BACK TO THE DIVINE MS. M --
-- OR ARE YOU STILL GOING BY "BINARY"?
OH, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE, BEAST?
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHY ARE WE STANDING AROUND WASTING TIME? WE WERE CALLED BY CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE OTHERS --

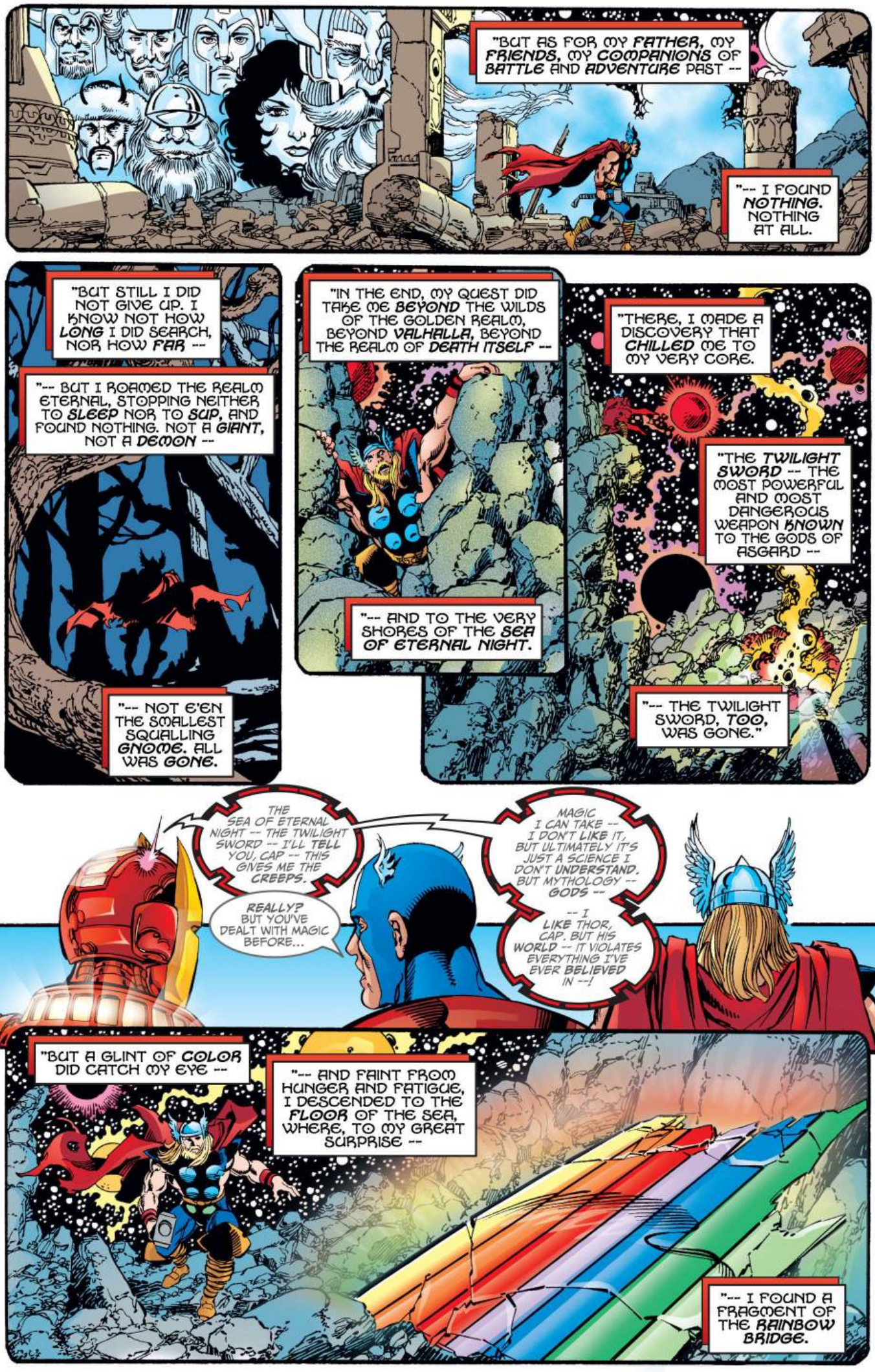

"-- SO WHERE ARE THEY?"
ARRIVED
ARRIVED
ARRIVED
THREE MORE ARRIVALS, CAP.
DECEASED
UNAVAILABLE
UNAVAILABLE
DECEASED
DECEASED
DECEASED
DEACTIVATED
UNKNOWN
DECEASED
UNAVAILABLE
UNKNOWN
DECEASED
DECEASED
UNAVAILABLE
DECEASED
UNAVAILABLE
I THINK THAT'S ABOUT ALL WE'RE GOING TO GET...
I AGREE, JAN. OF THE MEMBERS AND HONORARIES WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM --
-- VIRTUALLY ALL OF THEM ARE DECEASED, IN ANOTHER TIME PERIOD, OR JUST PLAIN ENIGMAS. I'D CALL IT A FULL HOUSE.
ROGER THAT, IRON MAN. JUST LET ME FINISH UP HERE.
-- AFRAID WE CAN'T MAKE IT, CAPTAIN. I KNOW ALL THREE OF US HAVE SERVED AS AVENGERS --
-- BUT OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR --
-- AND I'M AFRAID WE'RE TIED UP WITH OUR OWN CONCERNS.
FRZATSH
LISTEN TO ME, AVENGERS. I GOT ATTACKED BY TROLLS. NOW I HEAR ABOUT YOUR PAJAMA PARTY. I DON'T WANT TO BE BOTHERED.
BOTHER ME AGAIN --
PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE, REED. THANKS FOR LETTING US KNOW, AND --
-- EH?!
-- AND I COME BOTHER YOU. GET IT?
KLIK
WELL NOW.
OKAY, OKAY. SO MAYBE IT WAS A BAD IDEA TO CONTACT HIM.
IT WAS A THOUGHT, JAN -- AND, AS USUAL FOR YOU, A GENEROUS ONE.
NOW, COME ON, GANG --

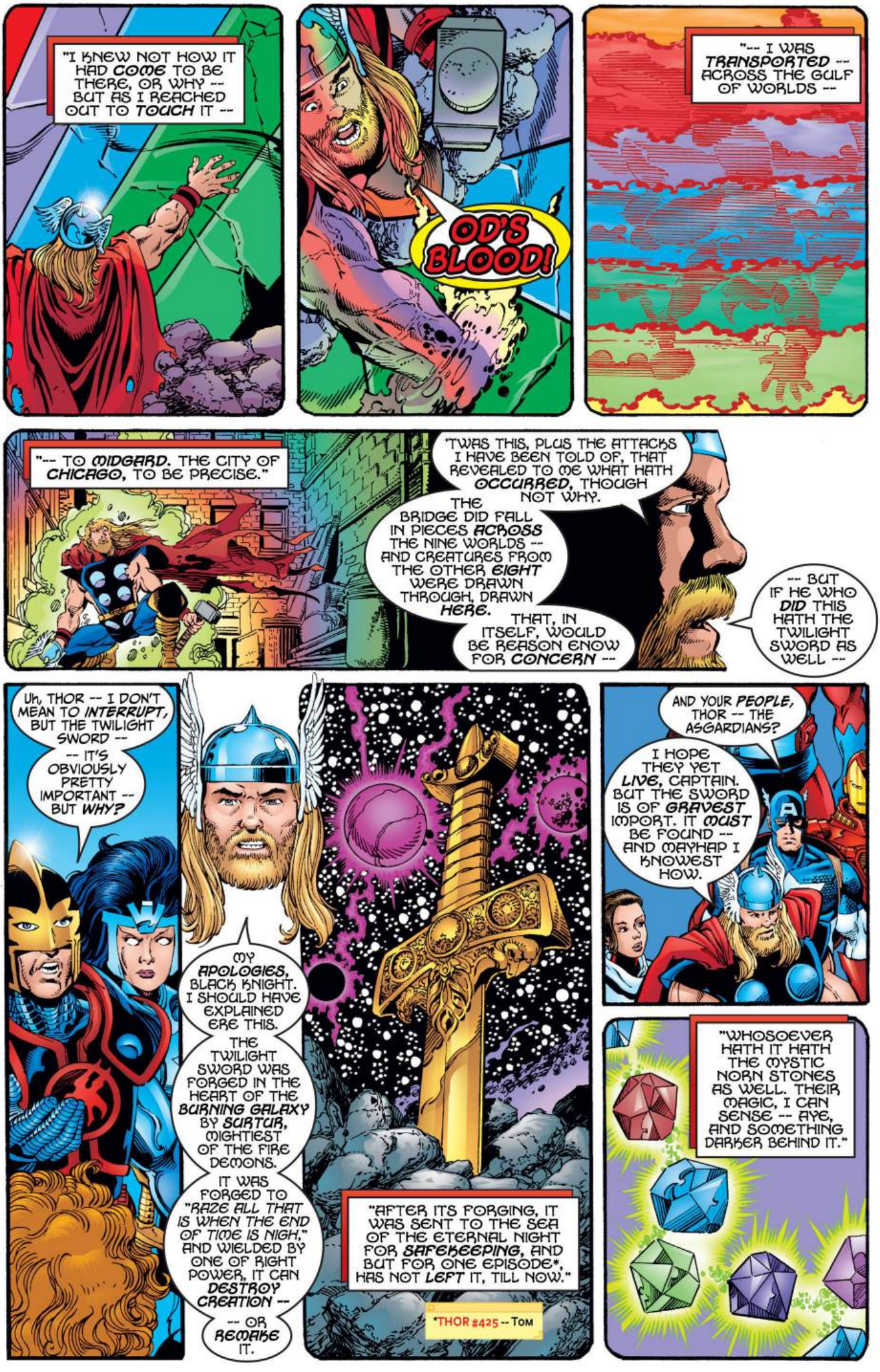
"...LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD."
GOOD EVENING, AVENGERS. I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE ALL OF YOU AGAIN, AND I WISH WE WERE MEETING UNDER HAPPIER CIRCUMSTANCES --
-- BUT AS USUAL, IT'S DANGER THAT'S BROUGHT US TOGETHER -- A DANGER THAT COULD THREATEN THE ENTIRE WORLD!
I'VE AGREED TO SERVE AS CHAIRMAN, AT LEAST UNTIL WE HAVE A SETTLED ROSTER, AND A LEADER CAN BE CHOSEN --
-- AND I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT I'VE RARELY SEEN SUCH AN ASSEMBLAGE OF POWER AND COURAGE IN ONE PLACE. WHATEVER THE FOE, AVENGERS --
-- I'M CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN MEET IT -- AND TRIUMPH.
CAPTAIN AMERICA SPEAKS NORMALLY -- NOT ONCE RAISING HIS VOICE ABOVE A PLEASANT, FIRM BARITONE. BUT EVEN SO, HIS WORDS STIR THE OTHERS --
-- AND THEY FIND THEMSELVES SITTING STRAIGHTER, MORE ALERTLY.
THEY ALL HAVE LIVES TO LEAD, PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH. BUT AS THEY LISTEN, THAT FADES. WHATEVER THEIR CONCERNS, THEIR WORRIES --
Chapter 3
A Common Threat...
I'LL SAY THIS FOR THE MAN, SUBBY --
-- HE KNOWS HOW TO GIVE A SPEECH!
-- THEY ARE ONCE AGAIN AVENGERS!

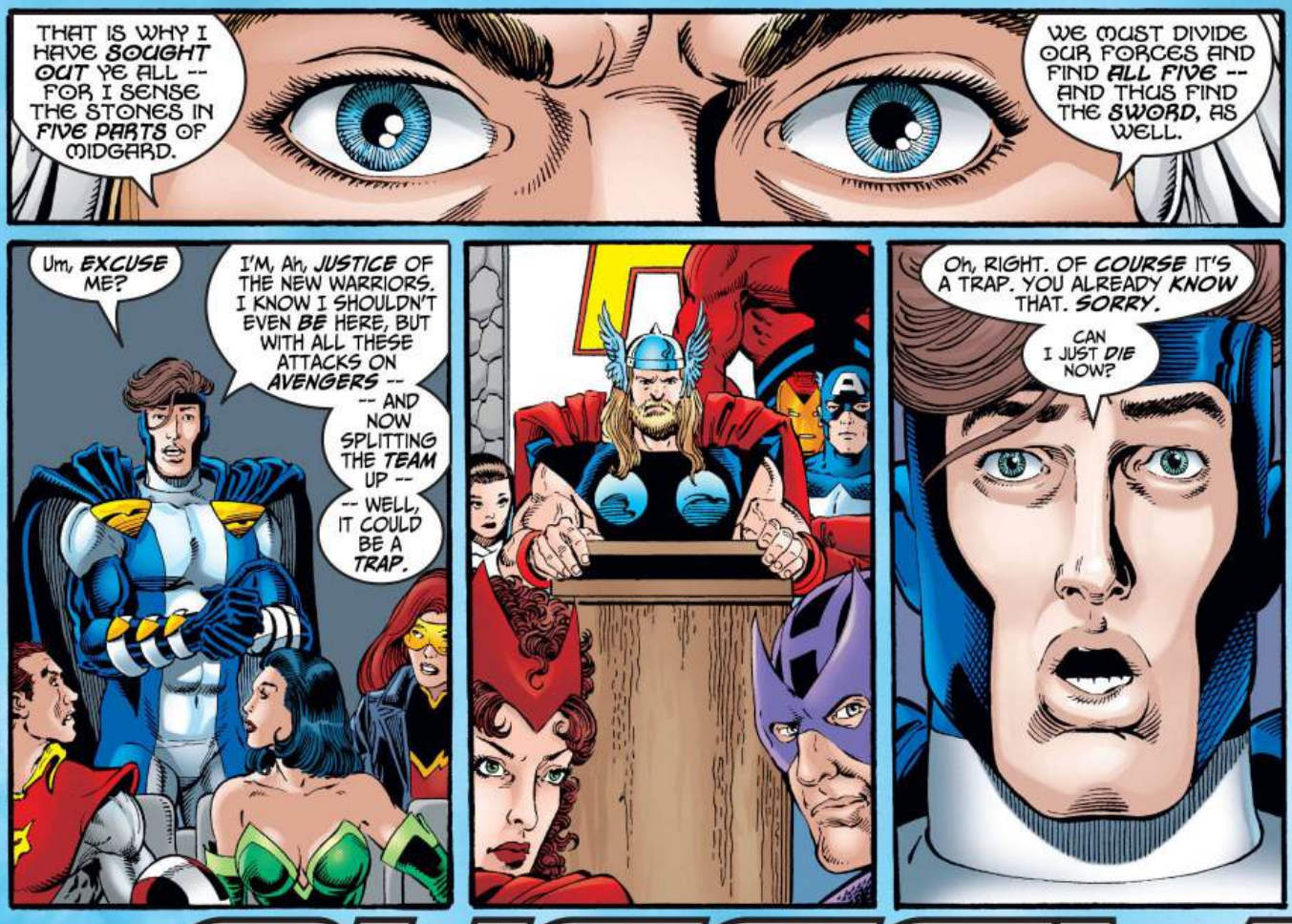
IT'S THOR WHO KNOWS THE MOST ABOUT THE SITUATION WE'RE FACING, SO UNLESS THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS --
-- I'D LIKE TO TURN THE PODIUM OVER TO HIM, SO HE CAN EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.
HNH! WE OUGHTTA BE UP THERE, TOO, WANDA! WE WEREN'T THAT FAR BEHIND CAP IN JOINING --
-- AN' WE'VE BOTH SERVED AS TEAM LEADERS! BUT DO THEY REMEMBER?
CLINT, SHH!
Uh, CAP?
UH, LOOK -- I KNOW THIS IS IMPORTANT AND ALL, BUT I'M KINDA UP TO MY NECK IN WHAT FEELS LIKE FIVE DIFFERENT THINGS AT ONCE --
-- AND, WELL, YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF AVENGERS HERE --
AND YOU WANT TO DUCK OUT, RIGHT? WELL, IF YOU'RE THAT YELLOW, THE AVENGERS DON'T NEED YOU! GO ON AND SKITTER AWAY, YOU --
HEY, NOW --
SWORDSMAN! THAT'LL BE ENOUGH OF THAT -- SPIDER-MAN'S PROVED HIS COURAGE A THOUSAND TIMES OVER!
OF COURSE YOU CAN GO, SPIDER-MAN. AND GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR LEGAL DIFFICULTIES* -- LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP.
THANKS, CAP -- AND GOOD LUCK WITH THIS THING, TOO -- WHATEVER IT IS.
*FOR MORE, SEE SPIDEY'S OWN BOOKS -- LIKE-HE-NEEDS-THE-PLUG-TOM
AN' JUST IN CASE YOU WANNA BADMOUTH A GUY WHO'S WORTH THREE OF YA NOW THAT HE'S GONE, FIN-HEAD, LEMME JUST WARN YA --
-- YOU'LL BE DOIN' IT THROUGH A FACEFUL A' SAND!
Oh, YEAH --?
SANDMAN! ALL OF YOU -- SETTLE DOWN! THIS ISN'T GETTING US ANYWHERE!
Ah, THE AVENGERS --!
ALL RIGHT. IF THAT'S IT, THEN THOR, IF YOU WOULD --

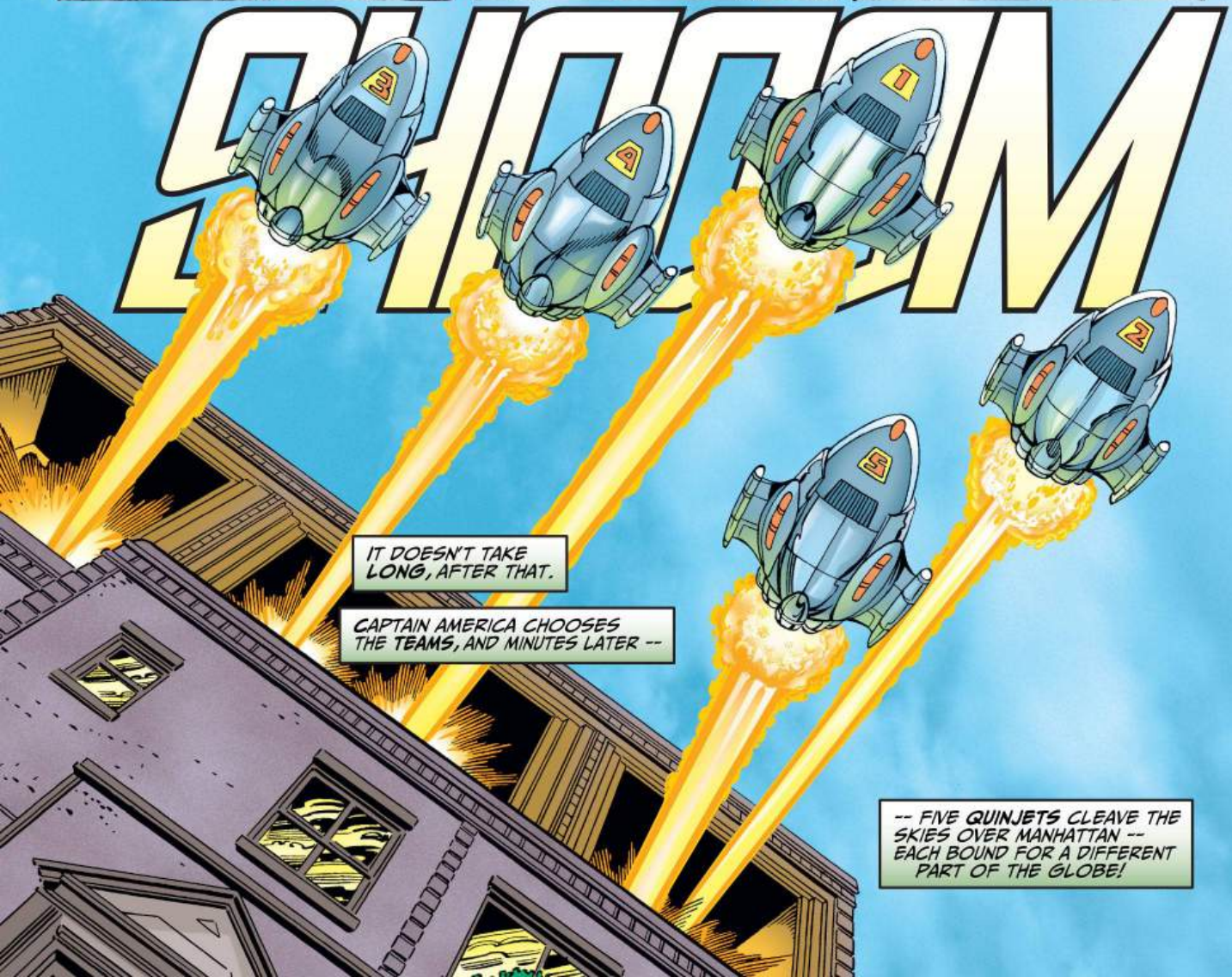

MY THANKS, CAPTAIN.
I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO KEEP MY TALE BRIEF, AVENGERS -- FOR THE THREAT WE FACE MUST BE DEALT WITH SWIFTLY.
THE LAST SOME OF THOSE GATHERED HERE DIDST SEE ME, I WAS LOCKED IN COMBAT* --
-- LOCKED IN COMBAT 'GAINST THE LATVERIAN DESPOT DOCTOR DOOM, WHO HAD SOUGHT TO STEAL REED RICHARDS'S YOUNG SCION --
"-- AND HARNESS THE POWER THE BOY DOTH WIELD, TO MAKE HIMSELF ALL-RULER OF THAT STRANGE OTHER-REALM IN WHICH WE HAD BEEN TRAPPED.
"HAD HE SUCCEEDED, ALL THE WORLD-LOST HEROES COULD HAVE PERISHED, NEVER SEEING THEIR TRUE MIDGARD AGAIN. BUT --"
VILLAIN! THIS BOY RETURNS TO HIS FATHER -- AND THEY WILL RETURN HOME! E'EN IF IT COSTS ME MY IMMORTAL LIFE AND SOUL!
*IN HEROES REBORN: THE RETURN #4. -- TOM
"UNABLE WAS I TO FORCE THE MADMAN BACK TO THE SPACE-ARK WHICH DIDST SHELTER US, AND SO --
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
-- THEN THAT IS AN ETERNITY WELL SPENT!
"-- AND AS TO WHAT DID TRANSPIRE NEXT --"
USING MY HAMMER -- TO CREATE A RIFT BETWEEN REALITIES, WHERE I SHALL HURL US BOTH!
AND IF I AM TO SPEND ETERNITY THERE, BATTLING YOU TO MAINTAIN THE SAFETY OF TWO REALITIES --
ZAK

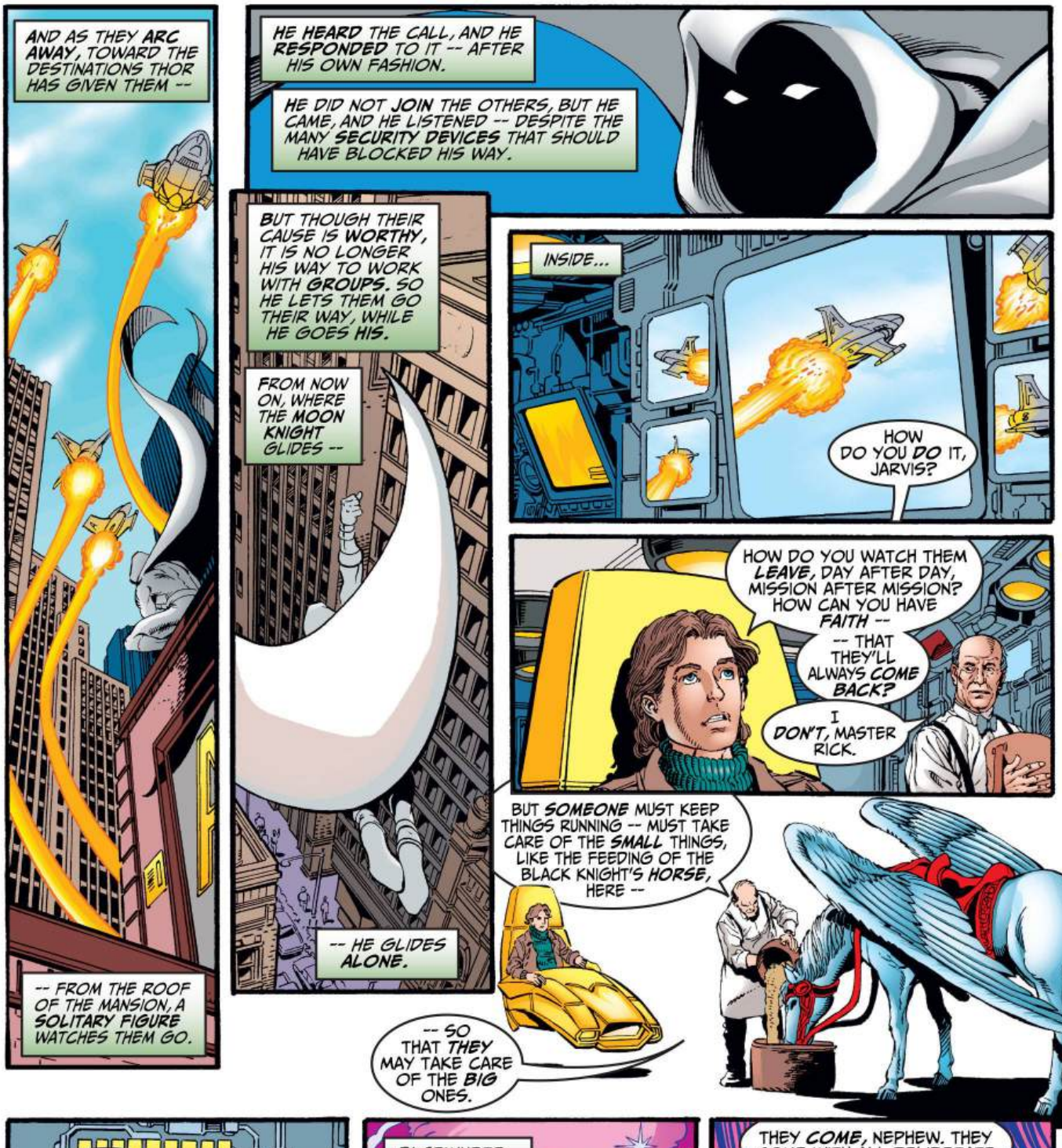

-- AS TO WHAT DID TRANSPIRE NEXT --
-- THY GUESS DOTH SERVE AS WELL AS MINE.
"ALL THAT I CAN SAY WITH CERTITUDE --
"-- IS THAT I DID AWAKEN IN GREAT ASGARD, AFTER MUCH TIME HAD PASSED -- A TIME FOR WHICH I CANNOT ACCOUNT.
"AND AS MY WITS RETURNED I DID DISCOVER, TO MY GROWING HORROR --
"-- THAT MY ONCE-PROUD HOME WAS PROUD NO LONGER!
"THE REALM ETERNAL WAS DESTROYED -- REDUCED TO MEREST RUBBLE, LIKE SOME CHILD'S TOY DASHED CARELESSLY TO THE GROUND.
"ITS NOBLE BUILDINGS GAPED OPEN TO THE WINDS, ITS GREAT HALLS LOOTED AND EMPTY. AND WORSE STILL --
"--NOWHERE, BUT NOWHERE, DID I FIND A SIGN OF LIFE.
"NO ASGARDIAN DID I FIND, NOR ANY ATTACKER -- NO SIGN OF WHAT CAUSED THIS DEVASTATION.
"THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, WHICH DOTH LINK FAIR ASGARD TO THE REST OF THE NINE WORLDS, I FOUND SHATTERED --
"-- BROKEN OFF AS IF STRUCK BY SOME FORCE BEYOND IMAGINATION.


"BUT AS FOR MY FATHER, MY FRIENDS, MY COMPANIONS OF BATTLE AND ADVENTURE PAST --
"-- I FOUND NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL.
"BUT STILL I DID NOT GIVE UP. I KNOW NOT HOW LONG I DID SEARCH, NOR HOW FAR --
"-- BUT I ROAMED THE REALM ETERNAL, STOPPING NEITHER TO SLEEP NOR TO SUP, AND FOUND NOTHING. NOT A GIANT, NOT A DEMON --
"-- NOT E'EN THE SMALLEST SQUALLING GNOME. ALL WAS GONE.
"IN THE END, MY QUEST DID TAKE ME BEYOND THE WILDS OF THE GOLDEN REALM, BEYOND VALHALLA, BEYOND THE REALM OF DEATH ITSELF --
"-- AND TO THE VERY SHORES OF THE SEA OF ETERNAL NIGHT.
"THERE, I MADE A DISCOVERY THAT CHILLED ME TO MY VERY CORE.
"THE TWILIGHT SWORD -- THE MOST POWERFUL AND MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON KNOWN TO THE GODS OF ASGARD --
"-- THE TWILIGHT SWORD, TOO, WAS GONE."
THE SEA OF ETERNAL NIGHT -- THE TWILIGHT SWORD -- I'LL TELL YOU, CAP -- THIS GIVES ME THE CREEPS.
REALLY? BUT YOU'VE DEALT WITH MAGIC BEFORE...
MAGIC I CAN TAKE -- I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT ULTIMATELY IT'S JUST A SCIENCE I DON'T UNDERSTAND. BUT MYTHOLOGY -- GODS --
-- I LIKE THOR, CAP. BUT HIS WORLD -- IT VIOLATES EVERYTHING I'VE EVER BELIEVED IN --!
"BUT A GLINT OF COLOR DID CATCH MY EYE --
"-- AND FAINT FROM HUNGER AND FATIGUE, I DESCENDED TO THE FLOOR OF THE SEA, WHERE, TO MY GREAT SURPRISE --
"-- I FOUND A FRAGMENT OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE.


"I KNEW NOT HOW IT HAD COME TO BE THERE, OR WHY -- BUT AS I REACHED OUT TO TOUCH IT --
ODS BLOOD!
"-- I WAS TRANSPORTED -- ACROSS THE GULF OF WORLDS --
"-- TO MIDGARD. THE CITY OF CHICAGO, TO BE PRECISE."
'TWAS THIS, PLUS THE ATTACKS I HAVE BEEN TOLD OF, THAT REVEALED TO ME WHAT HATH OCCURRED, THOUGH NOT WHY.
THE BRIDGE DID FALL IN PIECES ACROSS THE NINE WORLDS -- AND CREATURES FROM THE OTHER EIGHT WERE DRAWN THROUGH, DRAWN HERE.
THAT, IN ITSELF, WOULD BE REASON ENOW FOR CONCERN --
-- BUT IF HE WHO DID THIS HATH THE TWILIGHT SWORD AS WELL --
Uh, THOR -- I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT, BUT THE TWILIGHT SWORD --
-- IT'S OBVIOUSLY PRETTY IMPORTANT -- BUT WHY?
MY APOLOGIES, BLACK KNIGHT. I SHOULD HAVE EXPLAINED ERE THIS.
THE TWILIGHT SWORD WAS FORGED IN THE HEART OF THE BURNING GALAXY BY SURTUR, MIGHTIEST OF THE FIRE DEMONS.
IT WAS FORGED TO "RAZE ALL THAT IS WHEN THE END OF TIME IS NIGH," AND WIELDED BY ONE OF RIGHT POWER, IT CAN DESTROY CREATION --
-- OR REMAKE IT.
"AFTER ITS FORGING, IT WAS SENT TO THE SEA OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT FOR SAFEKEEPING, AND BUT FOR ONE EPISODE*, HAS NOT LEFT IT, TILL NOW."
*THOR #425 -- TOM
AND YOUR PEOPLE, THOR -- THE ASGARDIANS?
I HOPE THEY YET LIVE, CAPTAIN. BUT THE SWORD IS OF GRAVEST IMPORT. IT MUST BE FOUND -- AND MAYHAP I KNOWEST HOW.
"WHOSOEVER HATH IT HATH THE MYSTIC NORN STONES AS WELL. THEIR MAGIC, I CAN SENSE -- AYE, AND SOMETHING DARKER BEHIND IT."

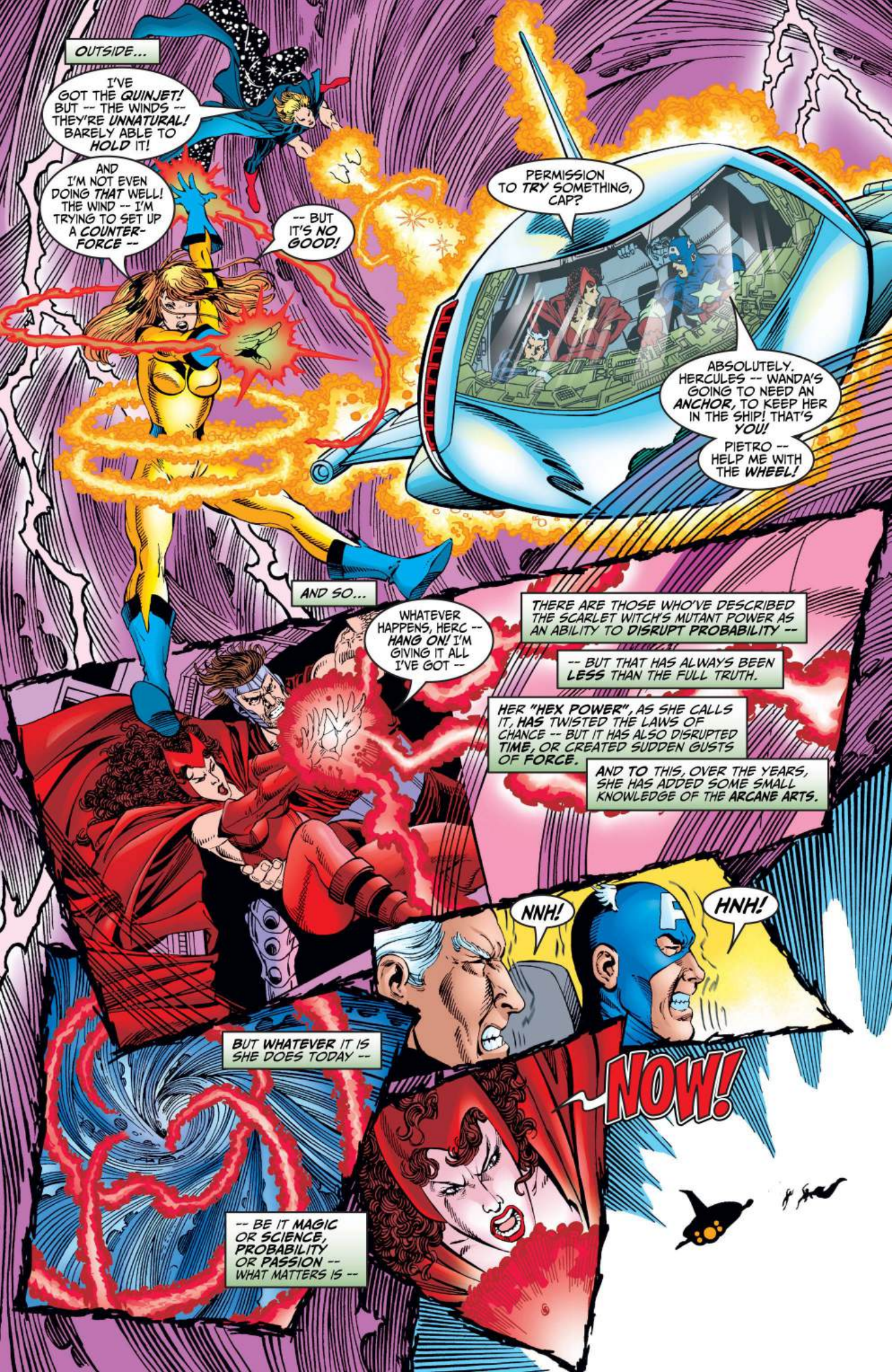

THAT IS WHY I HAVE SOUGHT OUT YE ALL -- FOR I SENSE THE STONES IN FIVE PARTS OF MIDGARD.
WE MUST DIVIDE OUR FORCES AND FIND ALL FIVE -- AND THUS FIND THE SWORD, AS WELL.
Um, EXCUSE ME?
I'M, Ah, JUSTICE OF THE NEW WARRIORS. I KNOW I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE, BUT WITH ALL THESE ATTACKS ON AVENGERS --
-- AND NOW SPLITTING THE TEAM UP --
-- WELL, IT COULD BE A TRAP.
Oh, RIGHT. OF COURSE IT'S A TRAP. YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT. SORRY.
CAN I JUST DIE NOW?


CHOOM
IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG, AFTER THAT.
CAPTAIN AMERICA CHOOSES THE TEAMS, AND MINUTES LATER --
-- FIVE QUINJETS CLEAVE THE SKIES OVER MANHATTAN -- EACH BOUND FOR A DIFFERENT PART OF THE GLOBE!


AND AS THEY ARC AWAY, TOWARD THE DESTINATIONS THOR HAS GIVEN THEM --
-- FROM THE ROOF OF THE MANSION, A SOLITARY FIGURE WATCHES THEM GO.
HE HEARD THE CALL, AND HE RESPONDED TO IT -- AFTER HIS OWN FASHION.
HE DID NOT JOIN THE OTHERS, BUT HE CAME, AND HE LISTENED -- DESPITE THE MANY SECURITY DEVICES THAT SHOULD HAVE BLOCKED HIS WAY.
BUT THOUGH THEIR CAUSE IS WORTHY, IT IS NO LONGER HIS WAY TO WORK WITH GROUPS. SO HE LETS THEM GO THEIR WAY, WHILE HE GOES HIS.
FROM NOW ON, WHERE THE MOON KNIGHT GLIDES --
-- HE GLIDES ALONE.
INSIDE...
HOW DO YOU DO IT, JARVIS?
HOW DO YOU WATCH THEM LEAVE, DAY AFTER DAY, MISSION AFTER MISSION? HOW CAN YOU HAVE FAITH --
-- THAT THEY'LL ALWAYS COME BACK?
I DON'T, MASTER RICK.
BUT SOMEONE MUST KEEP THINGS RUNNING -- MUST TAKE CARE OF THE SMALL THINGS, LIKE THE FEEDING OF THE BLACK KNIGHT'S HORSE, HERE --
-- SO THAT THEY MAY TAKE CARE OF THE BIG ONES.
AND I'M HONORED THAT THEY ALLOW IT TO BE ME.
ELSEWHERE...
THEY COME, NEPHEW. THEY COME WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED.
AND IF WE HAVE WOVEN OUR SUBTLE MAGICKS CORRECTLY, THE ONE WE NEED WILL SOON FALL INTO OUR LAPS...

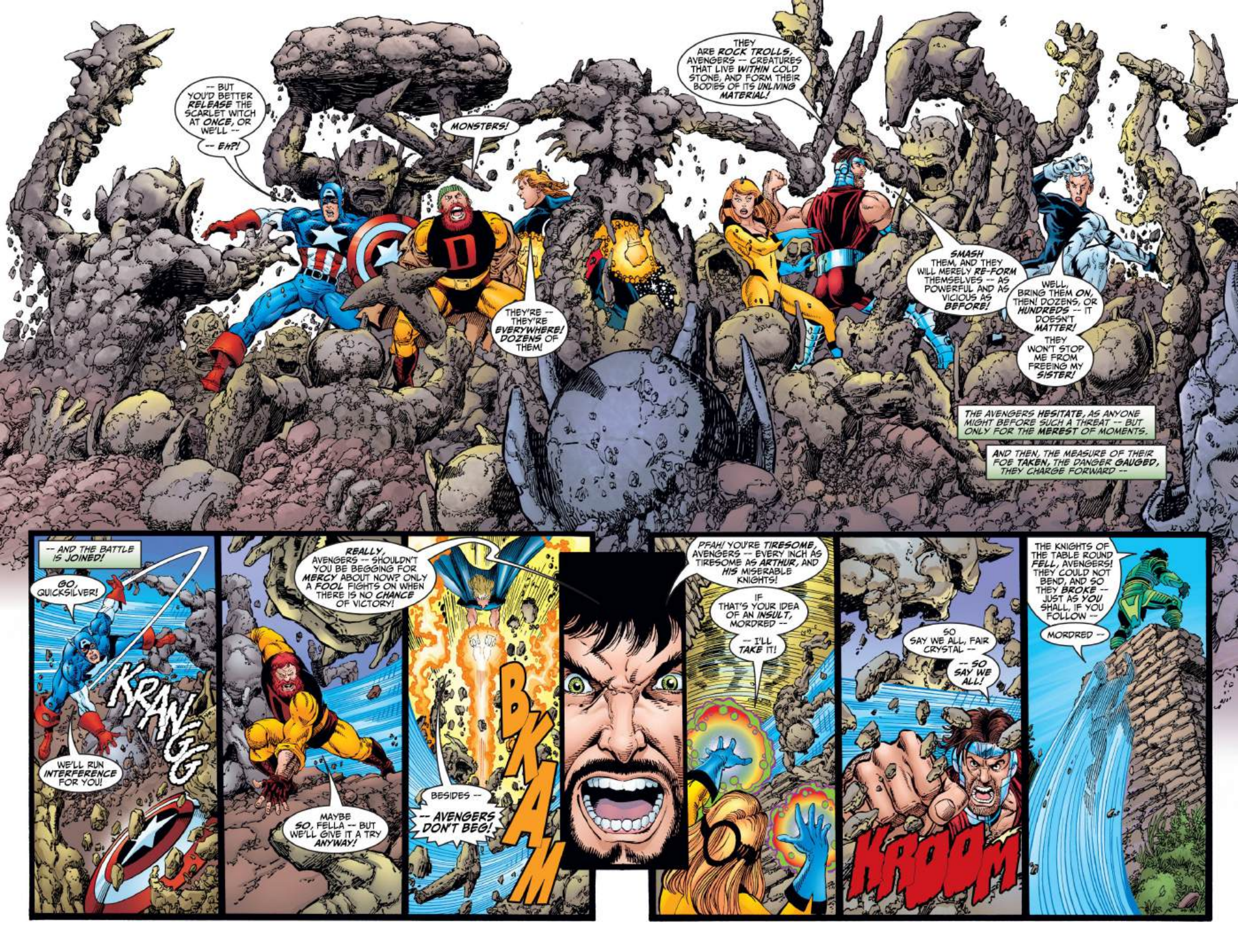
SOON...
TINTAGEL HEAD, OFF THE COAST OF CORNWALL. COMING UP ON PORT, CAP.
THAT'S WHERE THOR SAID ONE OF THE NORN STONES WAS --
-- AND HE HASN'T CONTACTED US TO SAY ANY-THING'S CHANGED. I'M BEGINNING LANDING PRO -- Huh?
CAP!
I SEE IT, WANDA! EVERYBODY --
--SEAT-BELTS!
HERCULES! D-MAN!
GENES OF AGON!
THE QUINJET WEIGHS ALMOST FIFTEEN TONS, AND EACH OF ITS FIVE ENGINES GENERATES OVER 8000 POUNDS OF THRUST.
NONETHELESS, THE FORCE THAT HITS IT SLAMS IT OFF-COURSE AS EASILY AS IF IT WERE STYROFOAM.
Chapter 4
...To Fight the Foes...

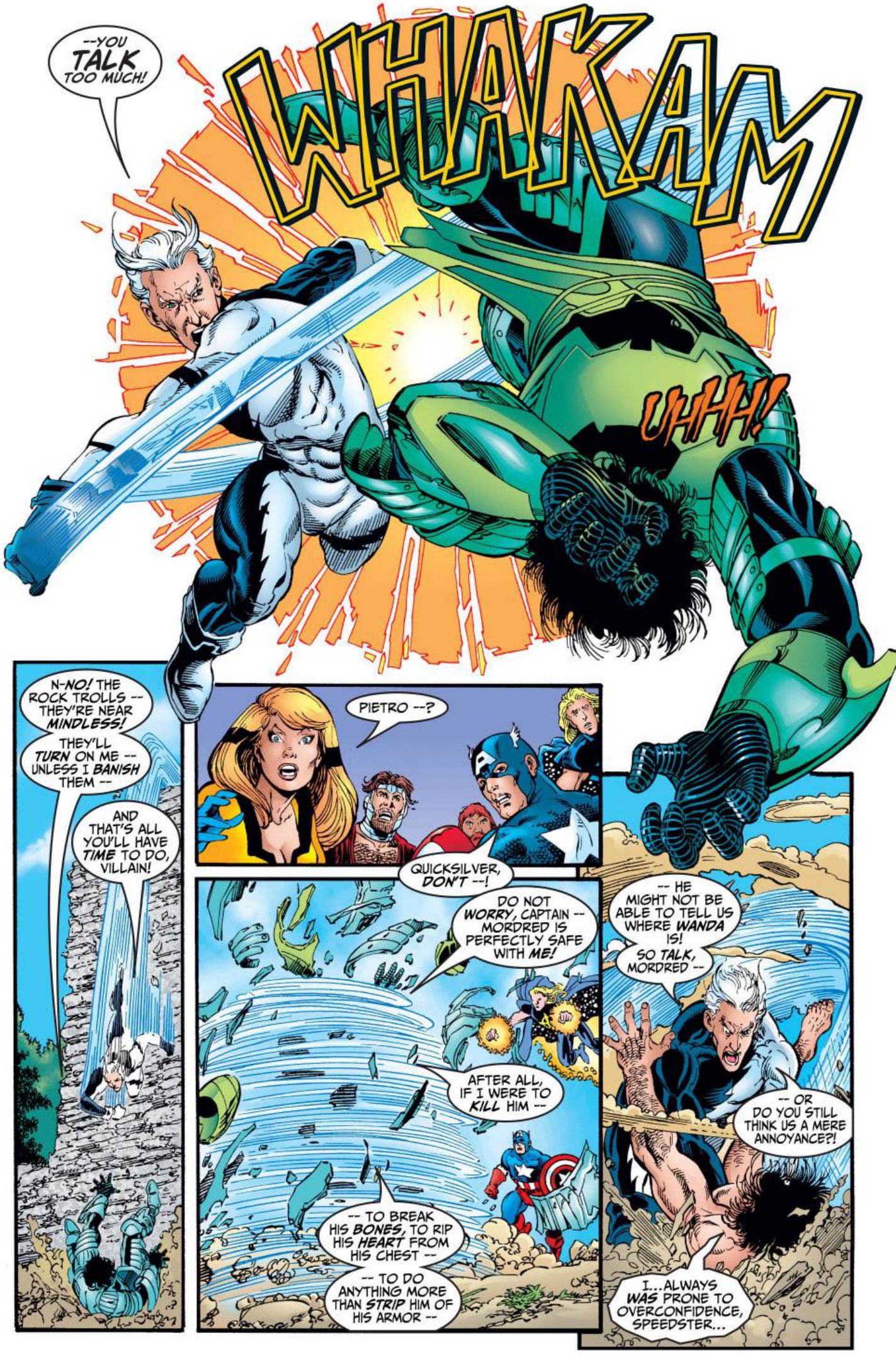
IT'S SOME SORT OF WHIRLWIND! BUT -- IT'S SO STRONG --
-- AND THE WAY IT SPRANG UP -- OUT OF NOWHERE --!
WE'VE HANDLED WORSE, WANDA -- WE'LL HANDLE THIS!
UHH!
PIETRO!
GET -- GET OFF OF ME, THOU MALODOROUS LUMMOX!
Uh, SORRY 'BOUT THAT, HERC. I DIDN'T MEAN NOTHIN' BY IT. YOU OKAY?
JUST -- GET -- OFF!
BLAST IT, IF YOU CAN'T STRAP IN, GRAB ONTO SOMETHING -- NOW! AND CRYSTAL, QUASAR --
"-- GET OUTSIDE AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE CYCLONE!"
I'LL STABILIZE THE SHIP, CRYS! YOUR ELEMENTAL POWERS MAKE YOU BEST SUITED TO TACKLE THE WINDS!
YOU'RE OKAY IN MY QUANTUM-FIELD, RIGHT?
I'M FINE. LET'S DO IT!
SQUAWK! PANTHER TO CAPTAIN AMERICA! BLACK PANTHER TO CAP! ARE YOU THERE?
I'M HERE, T'CHALLA. YOU FOUND SOMETHING?
PLENTY, BUT THOR SAYS OTHER FOUR NORN STONES HAVE VANISHED, AND REAPPEARED -- NEAR YOU!
ACKNOWLEDGED. WE'LL BE READY!
PANTHER OUT!


OUTSIDE...
I'VE GOT THE QUINJET! BUT -- THE WINDS -- THEY'RE UNNATURAL! BARELY ABLE TO HOLD IT!
AND I'M NOT EVEN DOING THAT WELL! THE WIND -- I'M TRYING TO SET UP A COUNTER-FORCE --
-- BUT IT'S NO GOOD!
PERMISSION TO TRY SOMETHING, CAP?
ABSOLUTELY. HERCULES -- WANDA'S GOING TO NEED AN ANCHOR, TO KEEP HER IN THE SHIP! THAT'S YOU!
PIETRO -- HELP ME WITH THE WHEEL!
AND SO...
WHATEVER HAPPENS, HERC -- HANG ON! I'M GIVING IT ALL I'VE GOT --
THERE ARE THOSE WHO'VE DESCRIBED THE SCARLET WITCH'S MUTANT POWER AS AN ABILITY TO DISRUPT PROBABILITY --
-- BUT THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN LESS THAN THE FULL TRUTH.
HER "HEX POWER", AS SHE CALLS IT, HAS TWISTED THE LAWS OF CHANCE -- BUT IT HAS ALSO DISRUPTED TIME, OR CREATED SUDDEN GUSTS OF FORCE.
AND TO THIS, OVER THE YEARS, SHE HAS ADDED SOME SMALL KNOWLEDGE OF THE ARCANE ARTS.
NNH!
HNH!
BUT WHATEVER IT IS SHE DOES TODAY --
NOW!
-- BE IT MAGIC OR SCIENCE, PROBABILITY OR PASSION -- WHAT MATTERS IS --

-- IT WORKS.
WE FLY SMOOTHLY ONCE MORE, FAIR WANDA -- THOU HAST TRIUMPHED! BUT-- ART THOU WELL?
JUST -- A LITTLE ODD. I FELT -- A PERSONALITY IN THERE, AND I -- I COMMANDED IT --
YOU WERE GREAT, WANDA! YOU STOPPED IT COLD!
WE'RE NOT THROUGH YET, AVENGERS! TAKE A LOOK -- DEAD AHEAD!
BY THE HOOVES OF PAN!
YOU SAID IT, HERCULES. THAT'S GOT TO BE THE TWILIGHT SWORD -- BUT THOR NEVER TOLD US IT WAS THAT BIG --!
WELL. Ah -- IF IT COMES TO THAT, CAP, I SUPPOSE I COULD PICK IT UP AND FLY IT BACK TO NEW YORK SOLO...
THANKS, QUASAR -- BUT SOMEHOW I DON'T THINK IT'LL BE THAT SIMPLE.
OKAY, I'M BRINGING HER DOWN. WE'RE GOING TO APPROACH THE SWORD -- BUT CAUTIOUSLY. QUASAR, QUICKSILVER -- YOU STAY WITH THE GROUP.
Uh, HERC -- I DIDN'T HURT YOU OR NOTHIN', DID I?
JUST STAY AWAY, FETID ONE! THE STABLES OF AUGEA THEMSELVES DID NOT SMELL SO --
HERCULES! BUTTON IT!
UH, DENNIS -- HOW ARE THINGS IN ZEROTOWN? ARE YOU --?
WE'RE OKAY, CAP -- THANKS FOR ASKIN'. WE GOTTA SAVE THE WATER FOR DRINKIN', NOT WASHIN' --
-- BUT WE'LL MAKE IT THROUGH THE WINTER.
GOOD MAN.

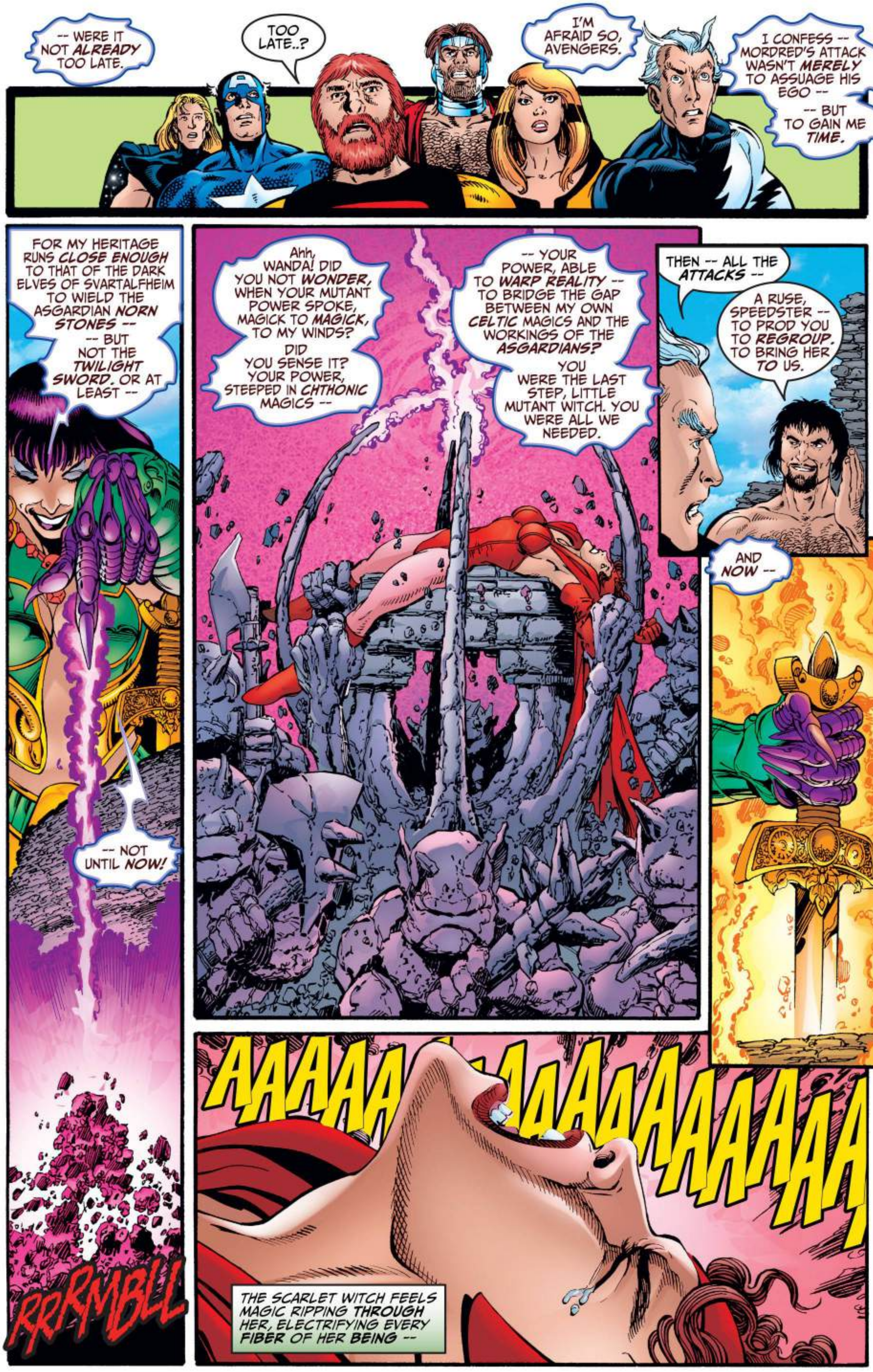
AT THAT MOMENT --
HO, AVENGERS!
WHAT?
WHO --?
LOKI?
NO!
GOOD MORROW, GENTLE HEROES. I AM MOST SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU -- BUT AS YOU SEE, I AM NOT LOKI, NORSE GOD OF EVIL.
NO, I AM MORDRED, SON OF ARTHUR PENDRAGON, MORDRED OF THE NORTHERN ISLES -- PERHAPS BETTER KNOWN TO YOU AS --
-- MORDRED THE EVIL!
I DO HOPE OUR LITTLE WINDSTORM WASN'T UNDULY TROUBLESOME. IN SOOTH, IF NOT FOR YOUR SUSPICIOUS NATURE --
-- YOU'D HAVE BEEN WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS --
SNAPP
-- FOR YOU BRING US THAT WHICH WE DO MOST DESIRE!
Wh? THE GROUND!
Huh?
WANDA!
HBMFF
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, MORDRED --


-- BUT YOU'D BETTER RELEASE THE SCARLET WITCH AT ONCE, OR WE'LL --
-- EH?!
MONSTERS!
THEY'RE -- THEY'RE EVERYWHERE! DOZENS OF THEM!
THEY ARE ROCK TROLLS, AVENGERS -- CREATURES THAT LIVE WITHIN COLD STONE, AND FORM THEIR BODIES OF ITS UNLIVING MATERIAL!
SMASH THEM, AND THEY WILL MERELY RE-FORM THEMSELVES -- AS POWERFUL AND AS VICIOUS AS BEFORE!
WELL, BRING THEM ON, THEN! DOZENS, OR HUNDREDS -- IT DOESN'T MATTER!
THEY WON'T STOP ME FROM FREEING MY SISTER!
THE AVENGERS HESITATE, AS ANYONE MIGHT BEFORE SUCH A THREAT -- BUT ONLY FOR THE MEREST OF MOMENTS.
AND THEN, THE MEASURE OF THEIR FOE TAKEN, THE DANGER GAUGED, THEY CHARGE FORWARD --
-- AND THE BATTLE IS JOINED!
GO, QUICKSILVER!
KRANG
WE'LL RUN INTERFERENCE FOR YOU!
REALLY, AVENGERS -- SHOULDN'T YOU BE BEGGING FOR MERCY ABOUT NOW? ONLY A FOOL FIGHTS ON WHEN THERE IS NO CHANCE OF VICTORY!
MAYBE SO, FELLA -- BUT WE'LL GIVE IT A TRY ANYWAY!
BESIDES --
-- AVENGERS DON'T BEG!
BKAM
PFAH! YOU'RE TIRESOME, AVENGERS -- EVERY INCH AS TIRESOME AS ARTHUR, AND HIS MISERABLE KNIGHTS!
IF THAT'S YOUR IDEA OF AN INSULT, MORDRED --
-- I'LL TAKE IT!
SO SAY WE ALL, FAIR CRYSTAL --
-- SO SAY WE ALL!
KROOM
THE KNIGHTS OF THE TABLE ROUND FELL, AVENGERS! THEY COULD NOT BEND, AND SO THEY BROKE -- JUST AS YOU SHALL, IF YOU FOLLOW --
MORDRED --

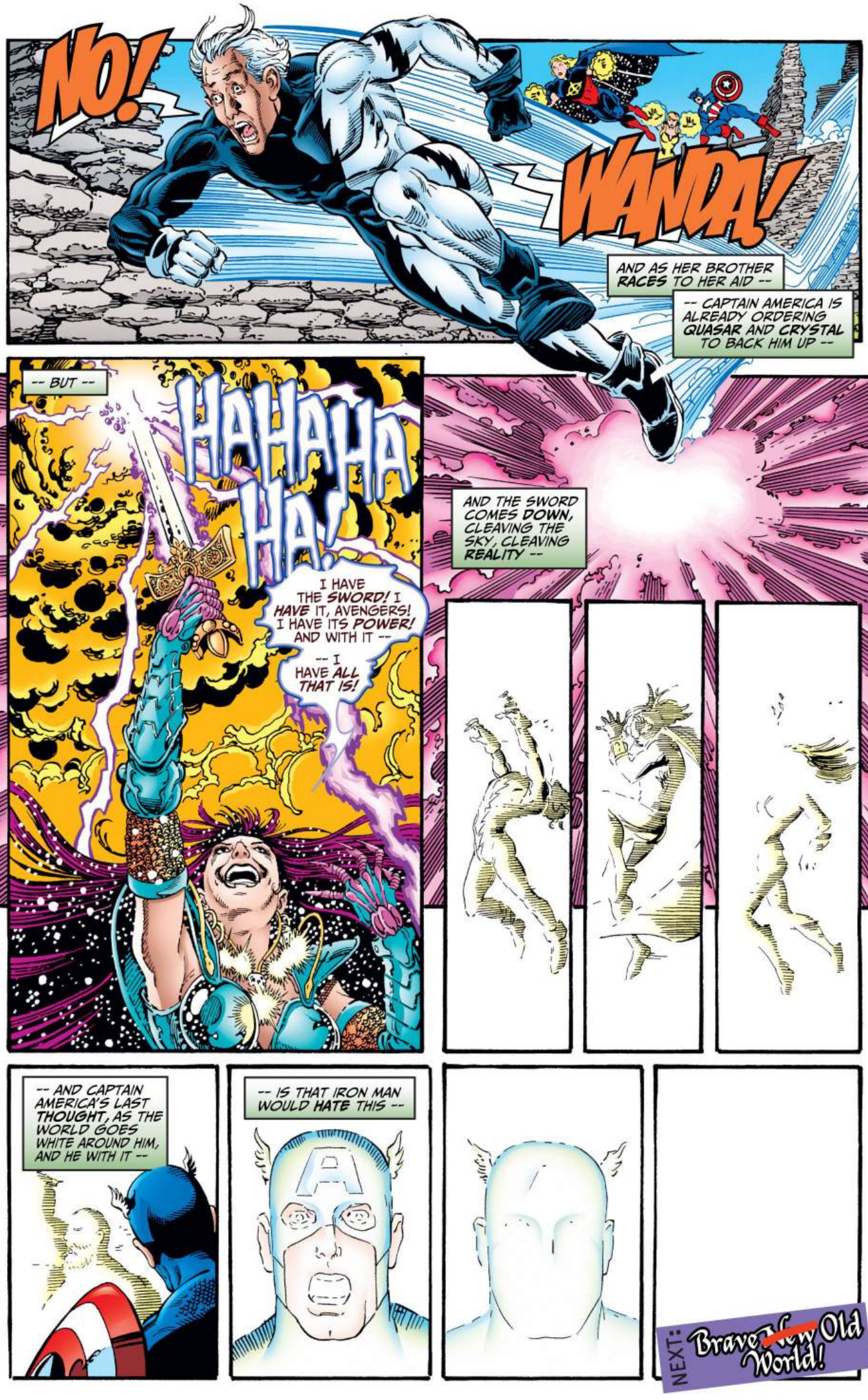

--YOU TALK TOO MUCH!
WHAKAM
UHHH!
N-NO! THE ROCK TROLLS -- THEY'RE NEAR MINDLESS!
THEY'LL TURN ON ME -- UNLESS I BANISH THEM --
AND THAT'S ALL YOU'LL HAVE TIME TO DO, VILLAIN!
PIETRO --?
QUICKSILVER, DON'T --!
DO NOT WORRY, CAPTAIN -- MORDRED IS PERFECTLY SAFE WITH ME!
AFTER ALL, IF I WERE TO KILL HIM --
-- TO BREAK HIS BONES, TO RIP HIS HEART FROM HIS CHEST --
-- TO DO ANYTHING MORE THAN STRIP HIM OF HIS ARMOR --
-- HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO TELL US WHERE WANDA IS!
SO TALK, MORDRED --
-- OR DO YOU STILL THINK US A MERE ANNOYANCE?!
I...ALWAYS WAS PRONE TO OVERCONFIDENCE, SPEEDSTER...

...BUT AS I SAID... ONLY A FOOL FIGHTS ON WHEN THERE IS... NO CHANCE OF VICTORY...
STILL, FOR ALL THAT... YOU ARE... DOOMED. DO NOT ASK ME... FOR YOUR SISTER'S WHEREABOUTS...
...ASK HER.
HER?
YES, AVENGERS -- ME!
AND I COULD HAVE SWORN IT WAS LOKI...
I RECOGNIZE HER FROM THE AVENGERS FILES, CAP!* THAT'S MORGAN LE FAY --
-- THE CELTIC SORCERESS WHO'S BEEN TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD FOR FOURTEEN HUNDRED YEARS! AND AROUND HER NECK -- THOSE ARE THE NORN STONES!
HOW PERCEPTIVE OF YOU, YOUNG KNIGHT! YES, IT'S TRUE -- I AM THE ULTIMATE AUTHOR OF ALL YOUR MISFORTUNES!
MY NEPHEW, MORDRED, WANTED HIS CHANCE TO HUMBLE YOU -- AND WHAT LOVING AUNT COULD REFUSE SUCH A REQUEST?
STILL, I NEVER EXPECTED HIM TO DEFEAT YOU -- NOR DID IT MATTER IF HE DID! ALL THAT MATTERED WAS THAT YOU PLAY YOUR PART CORRECTLY --
-- AND IN THAT, YOU'VE PROVED MOST COOPERATIVE!
COOPERATIVE? FORGET IT, LE FAY! YOU HAVE THE UPPER HAND NOW -- BUT WE'LL FIND A WAY TO BEAT YOU!
OH, SO, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
*THE AVENGERS CLASHED WITH MORGAN BACK IN VOL. 1 #240-241 -- TOM

YOU'LL FIGHT, I'M SURE -- YOU ALWAYS DO.
EVEN NOW, YOUR FELLOWS BATTLE MY MINIONS AROUND THE WORLD.
YOUR BLACK WIDOW -- LOATH SHE MAY BE TO LEAD AVENGERS ONCE MORE, BUT THERE SHE IS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC --
AND OF COURSE, NOT ALL MY MINIONS ARE THE ASGARDIANS I LURED HERE AFTER I LEARNED OF ASGARD'S DESTRUCTION. IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA --
FIRESTAR, JUSTICE, MAGDALENE -- KEEP AT IT!
-- IRON MAN SPEARHEADS HIS DETERMINED BAND AGAINST MY OLD ALLIES THE FOMOR --
PULL, RAGE -- IT'LL BE WEAKER ON LAND!
EY, THESE AREN'T NORSE BEINGS! I'M DOING COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY THIS SEMESTER --
-- AN' THEY'RE CELTIC!
THAT'S NICE, LIGHTNING! HIT 'EM ANYWAY!
-- CURSING UNDER HIS BREATH ALL THE WHILE, BUT NEVER FLAGGING.
-- COMMANDING THE ATTACK ON THE MIDGARD SERPENT. THAT IS THE KIND OF WOMAN SHE IS.
DEEP IN THE ARCTIC --
-- THE WASP MARSHALS HER TEAM 'GAINST FROST GIANTS. SHE AND HERS, THEY KNOW THIS ISN'T THE MAIN BATTLE, THE CRUCIAL ONE --
BACK THEM INTO EACH OTHER! MAYBE PHOTON CAN MELT THEM TOGETHER!
-- BUT THEY FIGHT NO LESS BRAVELY AND SELFLESSLY FOR IT.
AND IN CENTRAL AMERICA, REANIMATED CONQUISTADORS BEDEVIL THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS.
WHOA, TROOPS! WHAT'D WE EVER DO TO TICK RAY HARRYHAUSEN OFF?
UNFORTUNATE, OF COURSE, THAT THOR COULDN'T FACE FAMILIAR FOES, OR THE BLACK PANTHER FIGHT ON HOME GROUND --
-- BUT AVENGERS DON'T PICK AND CHOOSE, DO THEY? THEY DO WHAT MUST BE DONE, FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE, FOR LIBERTY --
-- FOR ALL THOSE WONDERFUL ABSTRACT CONCEPTS. AND I'M SURE BOTH YOU AND THEY COULD WIN, TOO --



-- WERE IT NOT ALREADY TOO LATE.
TOO LATE..?
I'M AFRAID SO, AVENGERS.
I CONFESS -- MORDRED'S ATTACK WASN'T MERELY TO ASSUAGE HIS EGO --
-- BUT TO GAIN ME TIME.
FOR MY HERITAGE RUNS CLOSE ENOUGH TO THAT OF THE DARK ELVES OF SVARTALFHEIM TO WIELD THE ASGARDIAN NORN STONES --
-- BUT NOT THE TWILIGHT SWORD. OR AT LEAST --
-- NOT UNTIL NOW!
RRRMBLL
Ahh, WANDA! DID YOU NOT WONDER, WHEN YOUR MUTANT POWER SPOKE, MAGICK TO MAGICK, TO MY WINDS?
DID YOU SENSE IT? YOUR POWER, STEEPED IN CHTHONIC MAGICS --
-- YOUR POWER, ABLE TO WARP REALITY -- TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN MY OWN CELTIC MAGICS AND THE WORKINGS OF THE ASGARDIANS?
YOU WERE THE LAST STEP, LITTLE MUTANT WITCH. YOU WERE ALL WE NEEDED.
THEN -- ALL THE ATTACKS --
A RUSE, SPEEDSTER -- TO PROD YOU TO REGROUP. TO BRING HER TO US.
AND NOW --
THE SCARLET WITCH FEELS MAGIC RIPPING THROUGH HER, ELECTRIFYING EVERY FIBER OF HER BEING --


NO!
WANDA!
AND AS HER BROTHER RACES TO HER AID --
-- CAPTAIN AMERICA IS ALREADY ORDERING QUASAR AND CRYSTAL TO BACK HIM UP --
-- BUT --
HAHAHA HA!
I HAVE THE SWORD! I HAVE IT, AVENGERS! I HAVE ITS POWER! AND WITH IT --
-- I HAVE ALL THAT IS!
AND THE SWORD COMES DOWN, CLEAVING THE SKY, CLEAVING REALITY --
-- AND CAPTAIN AMERICA'S LAST THOUGHT, AS THE WORLD GOES WHITE AROUND HIM, AND HE WITH IT --
-- IS THAT IRON MAN WOULD HATE THIS --
NEXT: Brave New Old World!

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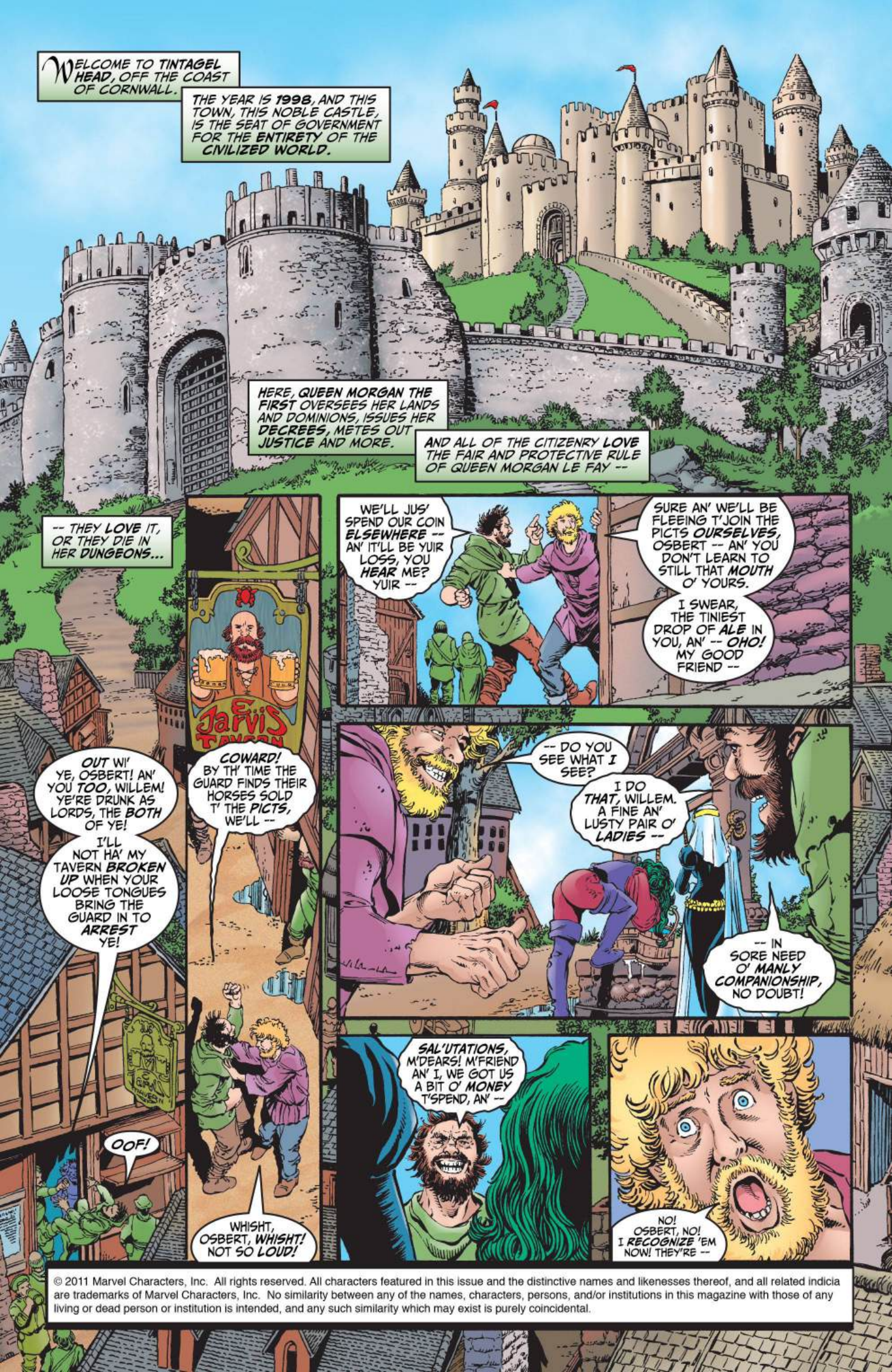

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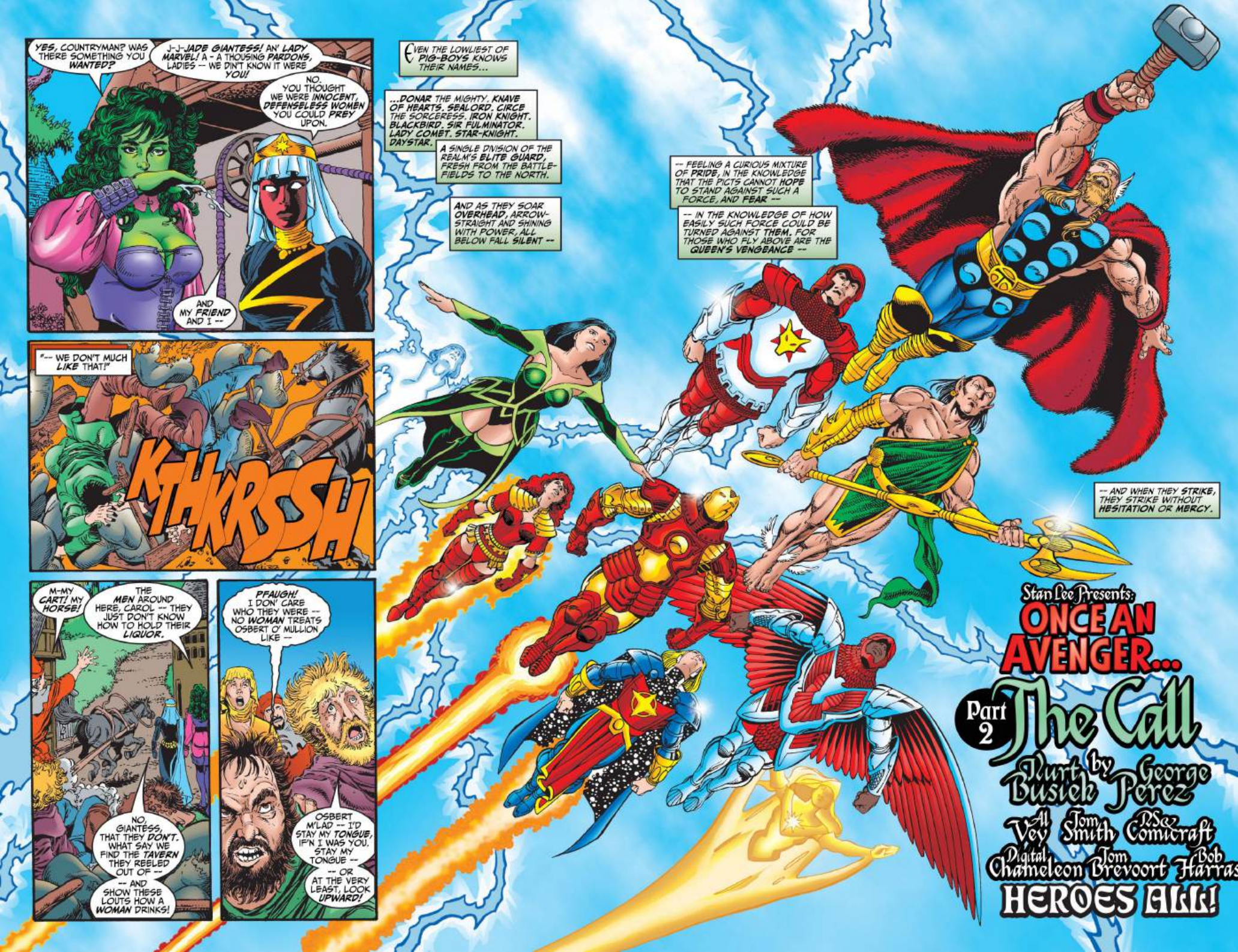
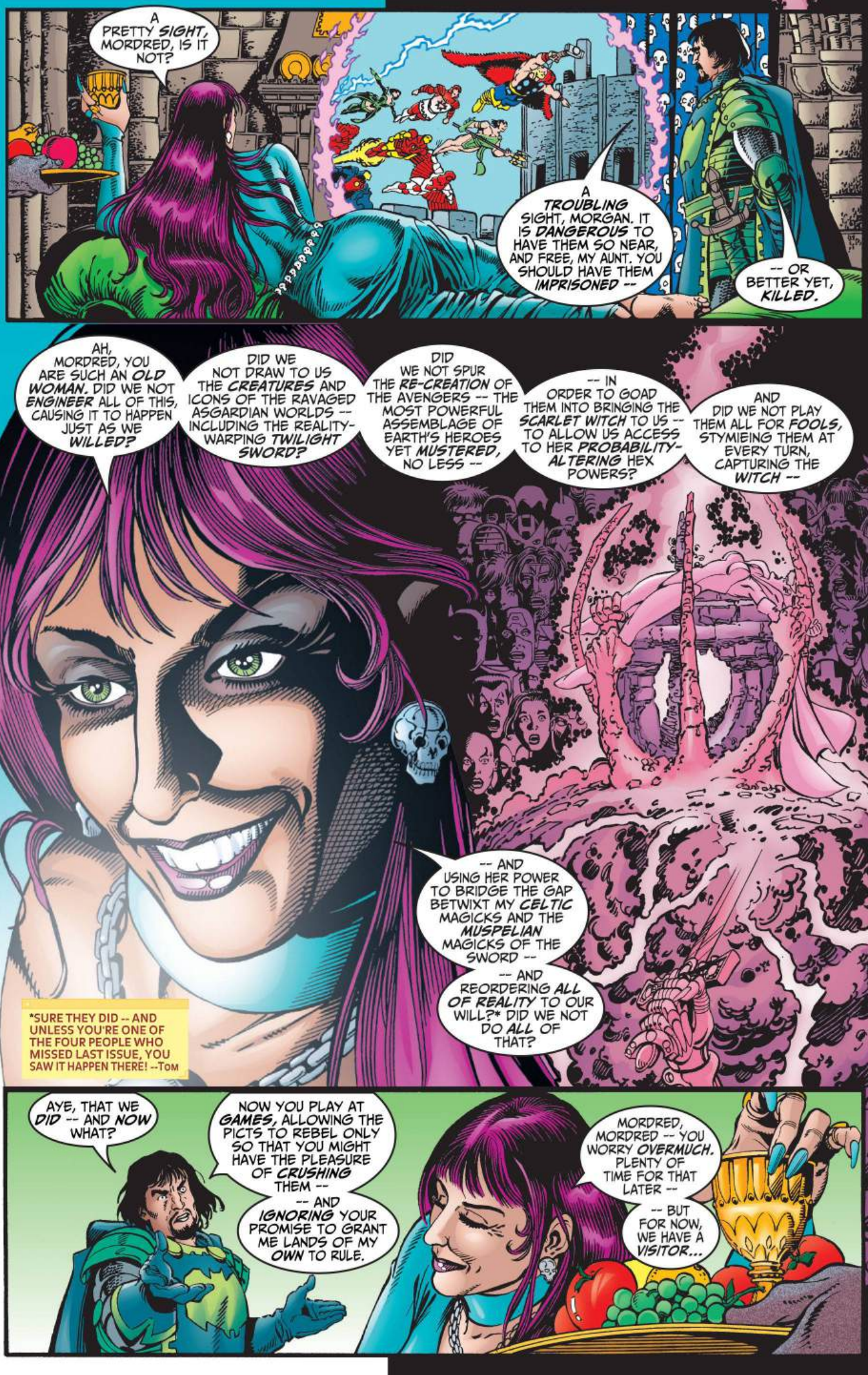
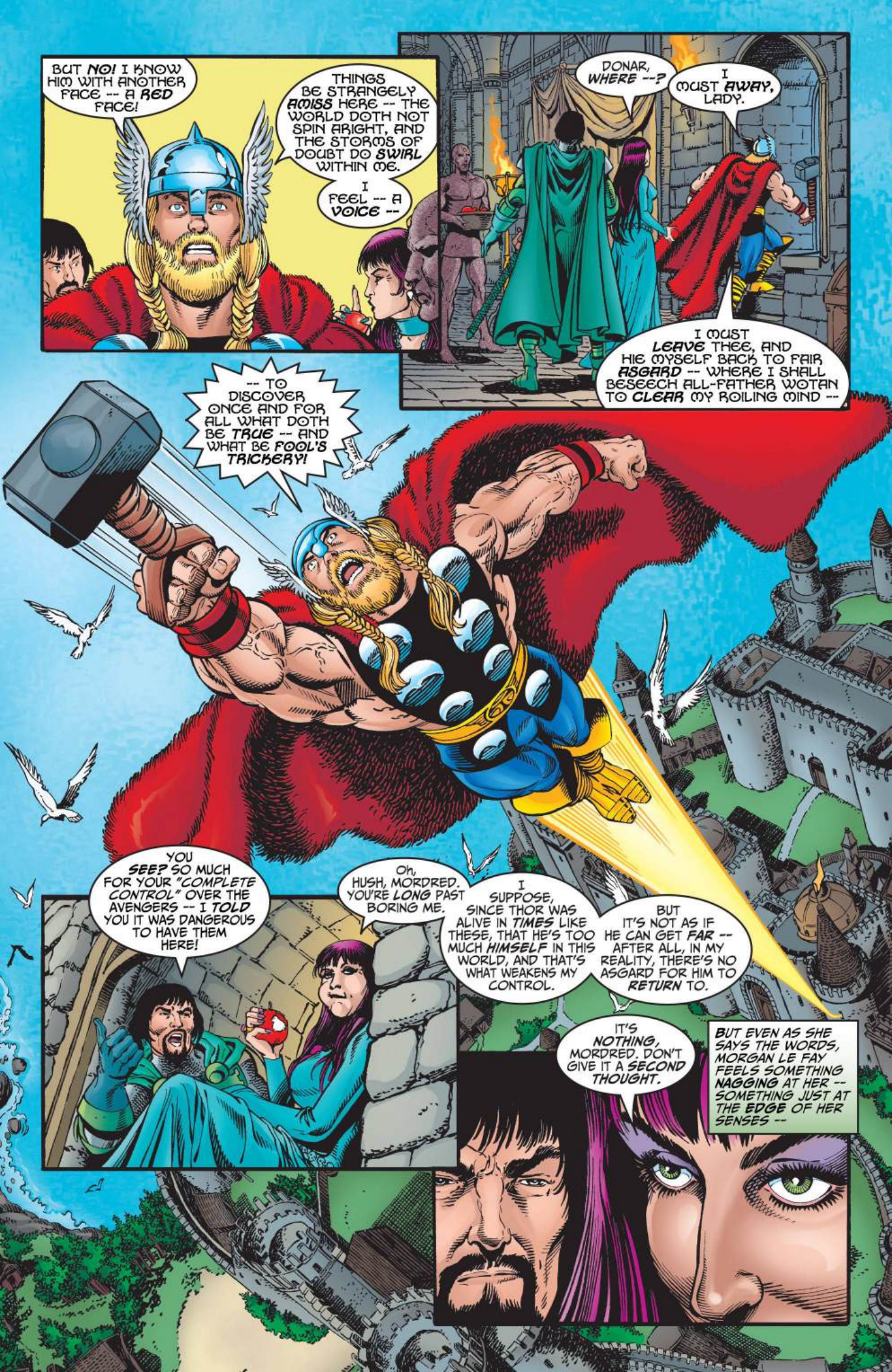
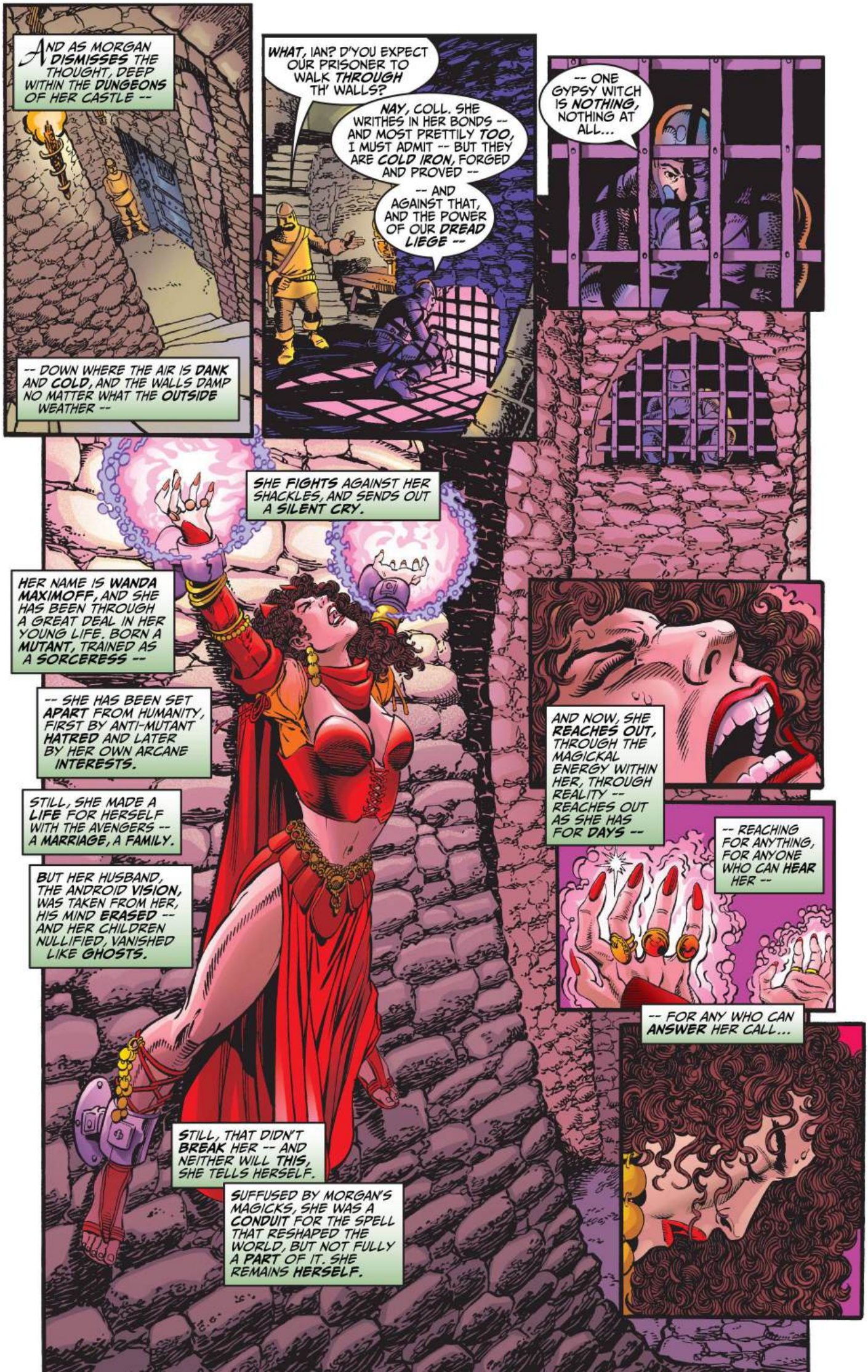
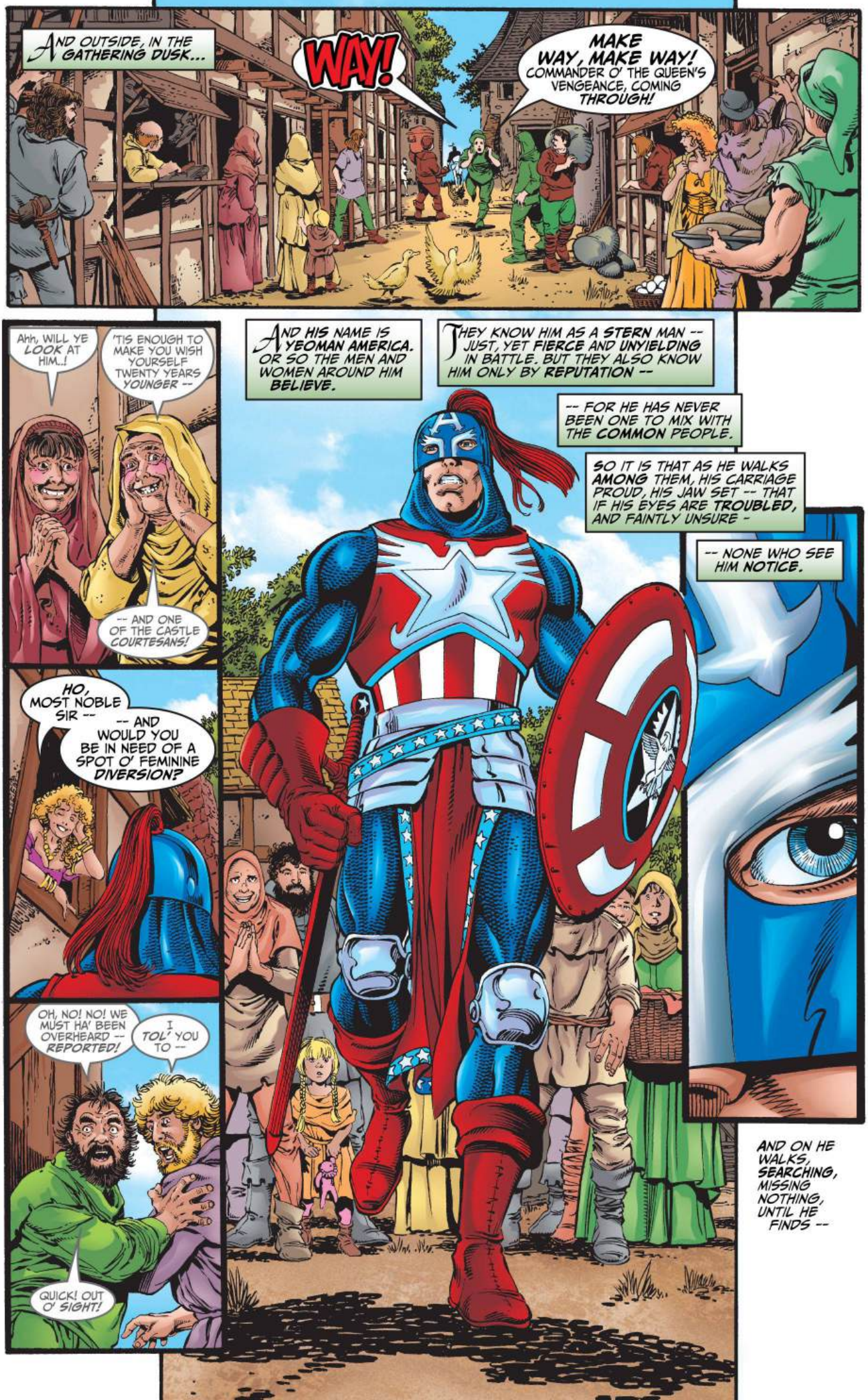

YES, COUNTRYMAN? WAS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANTED?
J-J-JADE GIANTESS! AN' LADY MARVEL! A - A THOUSING PARDONS, LADIES -- WE DIN'T KNOW IT WERE YOU!
NO. YOU THOUGHT WE WERE INNOCENT, DEFENSELESS WOMEN YOU COULD PREY UPON.
AND MY FRIEND AND I --
EVEN THE LOWLIEST OF PIG-BOYS KNOWS THEIR NAMES...
...DONAR THE MIGHTY. KNAVE OF HEARTS. SEALORD. CIRCE THE SORCERESS. IRON KNIGHT. BLACKBIRD. SIR FULMINATOR. LADY COMET. STAR-KNIGHT. DAYSTAR.
A SINGLE DIVISION OF THE REALM'S ELITE GUARD, FRESH FROM THE BATTLE-FIELDS TO THE NORTH.
AND AS THEY SOAR OVERHEAD, ARROW-STRAIGHT AND SHINING WITH POWER, ALL BELOW FALL SILENT --
-- FEELING A CURIOUS MIXTURE OF PRIDE, IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE PICTS CANNOT HOPE TO STAND AGAINST SUCH A FORCE, AND FEAR --
-- IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW EASILY SUCH FORCE COULD BE TURNED AGAINST THEM. FOR THOSE WHO FLY ABOVE ARE THE QUEEN'S VENGEANCE --
"-- WE DON'T MUCH LIKE THAT!"
KTHKRSSH!
-- AND WHEN THEY STRIKE, THEY STRIKE WITHOUT HESITATION OR MERCY.
M-MY CART! MY HORSE!
THE MEN AROUND HERE, CAROL -- THEY JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO HOLD THEIR LIQUOR.
NO, GIANTESS, THAT THEY DON'T. WHAT SAY WE FIND THE TAVERN THEY REELED OUT OF --
-- AND SHOW THESE LOUTS HOW A WOMAN DRINKS!
PFAUGH! I DON' CARE WHO THEY WERE -- NO WOMAN TREATS OSBERT O' MULLION LIKE --
OSBERT M'LAD -- I'D STAY MY TONGUE, IF'N I WAS YOU. STAY MY TONGUE --
-- OR AT THE VERY LEAST, LOOK UPWARD!
Stan Lee Presents:
ONCE AN AVENGER...
Part 2
The Call
by
Kurt Busiek
George Perez
Al Vey
Tom Smith
PS Comicraft
Digital Chameleon
Tom Brevoort
Bob Harras
HEROES ALL!


A PRETTY SIGHT, MORDRED, IS IT NOT?
A TROUBLING SIGHT, MORGAN. IT IS DANGEROUS TO HAVE THEM SO NEAR, AND FREE, MY AUNT. YOU SHOULD HAVE THEM IMPRISONED --
-- OR BETTER YET, KILLED.
AH, MORDRED, YOU ARE SUCH AN OLD WOMAN. DID WE NOT ENGINEER ALL OF THIS, CAUSING IT TO HAPPEN JUST AS WE WILLED?
DID WE NOT DRAW TO US THE CREATURES AND ICONS OF THE RAVAGED ASGARDIAN WORLDS -- INCLUDING THE REALITY-WARPING TWILIGHT SWORD?
DID WE NOT SPUR THE RE-CREATION OF THE AVENGERS -- THE MOST POWERFUL ASSEMBLAGE OF EARTH'S HEROES YET MUSTERED, NO LESS --
-- IN ORDER TO GOAD THEM INTO BRINGING THE SCARLET WITCH TO US -- TO ALLOW US ACCESS TO HER PROBABILITY-ALTERING HEX POWERS?
AND DID WE NOT PLAY THEM ALL FOR FOOLS, STYMIEING THEM AT EVERY TURN, CAPTURING THE WITCH --
-- AND USING HER POWER TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWIXT MY CELTIC MAGICKS AND THE MUSPELIAN MAGICKS OF THE SWORD --
-- AND REORDERING ALL OF REALITY TO OUR WILL?* DID WE NOT DO ALL OF THAT?
*SURE THEY DID -- AND UNLESS YOU'RE ONE OF THE FOUR PEOPLE WHO MISSED LAST ISSUE, YOU SAW IT HAPPEN THERE! --Tom
AYE, THAT WE DID -- AND NOW WHAT?
NOW YOU PLAY AT GAMES, ALLOWING THE PICTS TO REBEL ONLY SO THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE THE PLEASURE OF CRUSHING THEM --
-- AND IGNORING YOUR PROMISE TO GRANT ME LANDS OF MY OWN TO RULE.
MORDRED, MORDRED -- YOU WORRY OVERMUCH. PLENTY OF TIME FOR THAT LATER --
-- BUT FOR NOW, WE HAVE A VISITOR...

HAIL, QUEEN MORGAN! HAIL, GREATEST OF MONARCHS!
I COME BEFORE THEE TO REPORT IMMINENT TRIUMPH OVER THE PICTS --
-- BUT ALSO THAT I AM MOST SORE AND RESTLESS OF MIND, FOR SOMETHING DOTH NOT SIT ARIGHT, AND I CANNOT BANISH MY TROUBLED THOUGHTS.
REALLY, DONAR? PERHAPS I CAN EASE YOUR MIND. WHAT TROUBLES YOU?
I AM THE GOD OF THUNDER, LADY. HOW DOES IT COME THAT I SERVE AS ONE OF THY SOLDIERS?
IT IS SO, I KNOW, BUT I CANNOT THINK BACK TO DISCOVER THE WHY OF IT.
IS THAT ALL? YOUR BATTLES MUST HAVE WEARIED YOU, IF YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN --
-- FORGOTTEN HOW YOU CHOSE TO LIVE AMONG MEN, TO LEARN OF MORTAL LIFE -- AND CAME TO MY COURT AS THE GRANDEST PLACE IN ALL CREATION.
PERHAPS IT WILL SOOTHE YOU TO KNOW THAT I'VE CHOSEN YOU AS MY HONOR GUARD, WHEN I TRAVEL TO ACCEPT THE SURRENDER OF THE PICTS.
IT -- IT IS A GREAT HONOR THOU DOST BESTOW ON ME, MORGAN. BUT STILL -- MY THOUGHTS DO TUG AT ME --
YOU NEED TO RELAX, DONAR --
-- TO LET GO OF YOUR STRAINS AND TRAVAILS. SERVANT -- ATTEND US!
SOME FRUIT, PERHAPS?
WHO -- WHO IS THIS?
I Am The Ghost Of Stone
Thunder God.
An Unliving Statue --
Ensorcel'd To Do
Milady Morgan's Bidding.
I -- I KNOW THIS MAN! BUT --
OF COURSE YOU DO, DONAR -- YOU'VE KNOWN HIM FOR YEARS --


BUT NO! I KNOW HIM WITH ANOTHER FACE -- A RED FACE!
THINGS BE STRANGELY AMISS HERE -- THE WORLD DOTH NOT SPIN ARIGHT, AND THE STORMS OF DOUBT DO SWIRL WITHIN ME.
I FEEL -- A VOICE --
DONAR, WHERE --?
I MUST AWAY, LADY.
I MUST LEAVE THEE, AND HIE MYSELF BACK TO FAIR ASGARD -- WHERE I SHALL BESEECH ALL-FATHER WOTAN TO CLEAR MY BOILING MIND --
-- TO DISCOVER ONCE AND FOR ALL WHAT DOTH BE TRUE -- AND WHAT BE FOOL'S TRICKERY!
YOU SEE? SO MUCH FOR YOUR "COMPLETE CONTROL" OVER THE AVENGERS -- I TOLD YOU IT WAS DANGEROUS TO HAVE THEM HERE!
Oh, HUSH, MORDRED. YOU'RE LONG PAST BORING ME.
I SUPPOSE, SINCE THOR WAS ALIVE IN TIMES LIKE THESE, THAT HE'S TOO MUCH HIMSELF IN THIS WORLD, AND THAT'S WHAT WEAKENS MY CONTROL.
BUT IT'S NOT AS IF HE CAN GET FAR -- AFTER ALL, IN MY REALITY, THERE'S NO ASGARD FOR HIM TO RETURN TO.
IT'S NOTHING, MORDRED. DON'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT.
BUT EVEN AS SHE SAYS THE WORDS, MORGAN LE FAY FEELS SOMETHING NAGGING AT HER -- SOMETHING JUST AT THE EDGE OF HER SENSES --


AND AS MORGAN DISMISSES THE THOUGHT, DEEP WITHIN THE DUNGEONS OF HER CASTLE --
-- DOWN WHERE THE AIR IS DANK AND COLD, AND THE WALLS DAMP NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTSIDE WEATHER --
WHAT, IAN? D'YOU EXPECT OUR PRISONER TO WALK THROUGH TH' WALLS?
NAY, COLL. SHE WRITHES IN HER BONDS -- AND MOST PRETTILY TOO, I MUST ADMIT -- BUT THEY ARE COLD IRON, FORGED AND PROVED --
-- AND AGAINST THAT, AND THE POWER OF OUR DREAD LIEGE --
-- ONE GYPSY WITCH IS NOTHING, NOTHING AT ALL...
SHE FIGHTS AGAINST HER SHACKLES, AND SENDS OUT A SILENT CRY.
HER NAME IS WANDA MAXIMOFF, AND SHE HAS BEEN THROUGH A GREAT DEAL IN HER YOUNG LIFE. BORN A MUTANT, TRAINED AS A SORCERESS --
-- SHE HAS BEEN SET APART FROM HUMANITY, FIRST BY ANTI-MUTANT HATRED AND LATER BY HER OWN ARCANE INTERESTS.
STILL, SHE MADE A LIFE FOR HERSELF WITH THE AVENGERS -- A MARRIAGE, A FAMILY.
BUT HER HUSBAND, THE ANDROID VISION, WAS TAKEN FROM HER, HIS MIND ERASED -- AND HER CHILDREN NULLIFIED, VANISHED LIKE GHOSTS.
AND NOW, SHE REACHES OUT, THROUGH THE MAGICKAL ENERGY WITHIN HER, THROUGH REALITY -- REACHES OUT AS SHE HAS FOR DAYS --
-- REACHING FOR ANYTHING, FOR ANYONE WHO CAN HEAR HER --
-- FOR ANY WHO CAN ANSWER HER CALL...
STILL, THAT DIDN'T BREAK HER -- AND NEITHER WILL THIS, SHE TELLS HERSELF.
SUFFUSED BY MORGAN'S MAGICKS, SHE WAS A CONDUIT FOR THE SPELL THAT RESHAPED THE WORLD, BUT NOT FULLY A PART OF IT. SHE REMAINS HERSELF.


AND OUTSIDE, IN THE GATHERING DUSK...
WAY!
MAKE WAY, MAKE WAY! COMMANDER O' THE QUEEN'S VENGEANCE, COMING THROUGH!
Ahh, WILL YE LOOK AT HIM..!
'TIS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WISH YOURSELF TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER --
-- AND ONE OF THE CASTLE COURTESANS!
HO, MOST NOBLE SIR --
-- AND WOULD YOU BE IN NEED OF A SPOT O' FEMININE DIVERSION?
OH, NO! NO! WE MUST HA' BEEN OVERHEARD -- REPORTED!
I TOL' YOU TO --
QUICK! OUT O' SIGHT!
AND HIS NAME IS YEOMAN AMERICA. OR SO THE MEN AND WOMEN AROUND HIM BELIEVE.
THEY KNOW HIM AS A STERN MAN -- JUST, YET FIERCE AND UNYIELDING IN BATTLE. BUT THEY ALSO KNOW HIM ONLY BY REPUTATION --
-- FOR HE HAS NEVER BEEN ONE TO MIX WITH THE COMMON PEOPLE.
SO IT IS THAT AS HE WALKS AMONG THEM, HIS CARRIAGE PROUD, HIS JAW SET -- THAT IF HIS EYES ARE TROUBLED, AND FAINTLY UNSURE -
-- NONE WHO SEE HIM NOTICE.
AND ON HE WALKS, SEARCHING, MISSING NOTHING, UNTIL HE FINDS --

HAWKEYE!
Hm?
WE NEED TO TALK. NOW.
A FINE COMPLIMENT, YEOMAN -- AND ONE RICHLY DESERVED, IF I SAY'T MYSELF! BUT YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I, THE NAME'S LONGBOW.
AND IT'S A NAME THESE TWAIN'LL HAVE REASON TO REMEMBER -- FOR THEY'RE THE HORSE-THIEVES WHO'VE PLAGUED THE GUARD'S LIVERY --
CERTAINLY, YEOMAN. BUT ARE YOU WELL? YOUR MANNER, YOUR SPEECH -- IT'S ALL SO --
CAPTAIN. NOT YEOMAN. CAPTAIN. AND YOU'RE HAWKEYE. REMEMBER.
Y'MN... WHT N HVNS NM R YU...
REMEMBER.
AND SUCH IS THE FORCE OF THAT PIERCING BLUE GAZE --
-- THAT THE ARCHER'S EYES, TOO, SHIFT AND CHANGE BEFORE IT --
-- AND --
OH, MAN! NOT ANOTHER ALTERNATE REALITY! NOT AGAIN!
OH, WELL -- AT LEAST THIS TIME I'M NOT DRESSED LIKE A BROWN PLANTMAN...
MAN. ANOTHER ALTERNATE REALITY...
SO HOW'D YOU SNAP OUT OF IT, CAP?
I'M NOT REALLY SURE. I... FELT SOMETHING -- LIKE A VOICE IN MY HEAD. A VOICE CALLING TO THE AVENGERS, CALLING FOR AID...
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I FELT IT TOO, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER --
-- NOT UNTIL YOU WOKE ME UP.

SHORTLY...
LOOK AT THIS. IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A DISNEY MOVIE, OR HOWARD PYLE'S TALES OF KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS --
-- BUT UNDER THE QUAINT EXTERIOR, ALL I SEE IS FEAR. THESE PEOPLE, THEY FLINCH WHEN THEY SEE US, AND TURN AWAY --
-- AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THEIR GUARDIANS! MORGAN'S IDEA OF PARADISE -- AND IT'S ROTTEN THROUGH AND THROUGH!
YEAH, YEAH -- SO WE FIX IT, RIGHT? THAT'S WHAT WE DO, AFTER ALL. AND WE START BY FREEING THE OTHERS, RIGHT?
IT MAY NOT BE THAT EASY.
Huh? WHY NOT?
THE SPELL THEY'RE UNDER -- IT MUST BE QUITE STRONG. I TALKED TO SIX OF THE "QUEEN'S VENGEANCE," AND NONE OF THEM HEARD THE CALL.
THAT'S WHY I TRIED AMBUSHING YOU -- I FIGURED THAT WITH YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE TEAM, IF I COULD SHOCK ANYONE INTO REMEMBERING...
I GET IT. THE EASIEST AVENGERS TO SNAP OUT OF IT ARE GOING TO BE THE ONES WITH THE STRONGEST SENSE OF BEING AVENGERS --
-- THE STRONGEST SENSE OF SPIRIT. WELL, I'VE GOT SOME IDEAS OF WHO TO TRY.
SO DO I. LET'S HEAD FOR THE BARRACKS -- I DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS SITUATION EXIST A MOMENT MORE THAN IT HAS TO.
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU. AND CAP?
THANKS FOR TRYING YOUR SHOCK TACTIC ON ME FIRST.
AS IF THERE WAS EVER REALLY ANY OTHER CHOICE. COME ON, PARTNER --
-- WE'VE GOT A WORLD TO WIN!

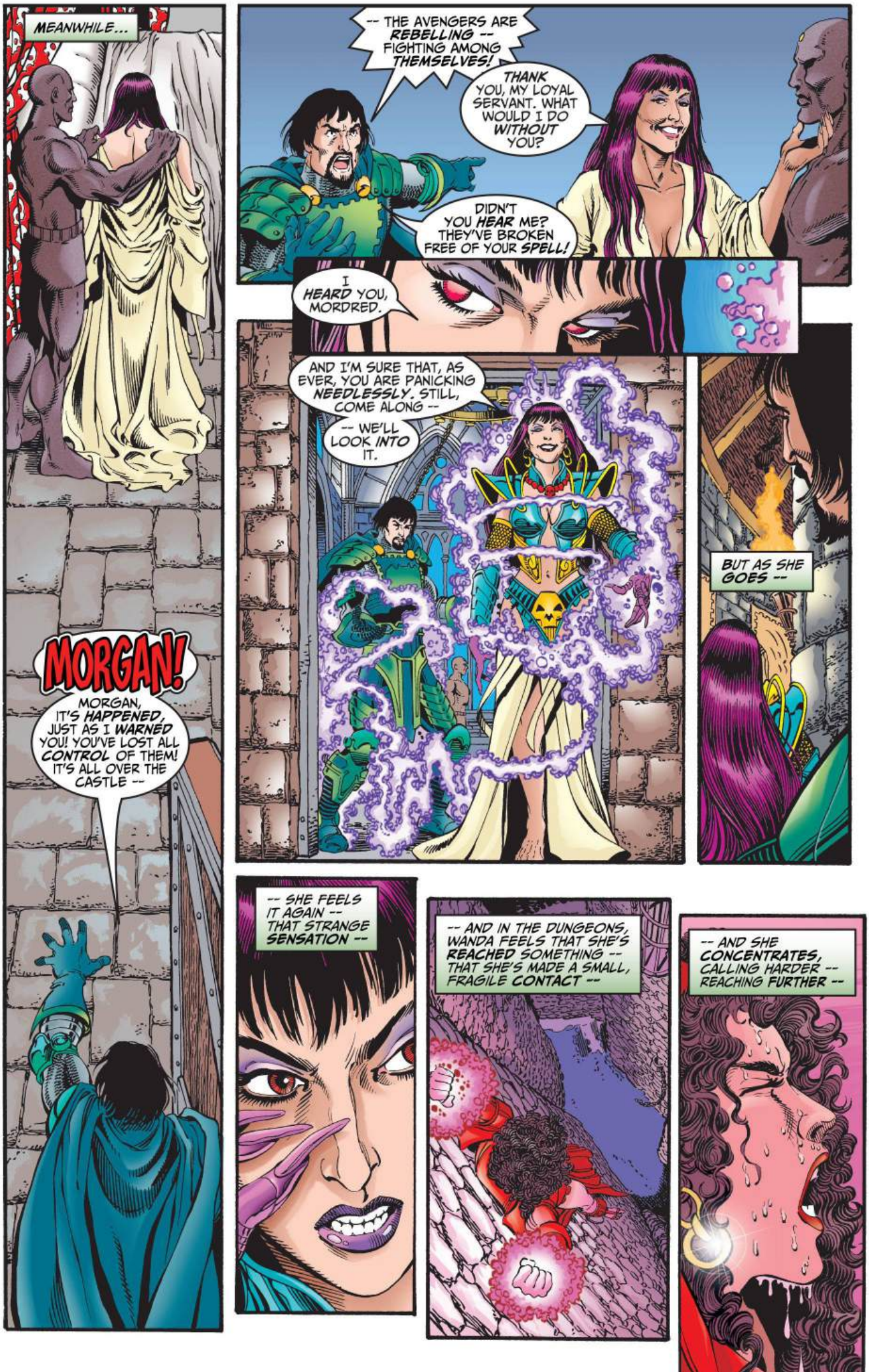
SOON, ON THE UPPER LEVEL OF THE QUEEN'S VENGEANCE BARRACKS, IN THE CHAMBERS OF ONE OF THE DIVISION COMMANDERS --
TONY. TONY, WAKE UP.
HNH? WH--?
TONY, YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN. TO REMEMBER.
EH --?! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS INTRUSION?
THIS IS MY BEDCHAMBER -- AND IT IS MOST IMPOLITE TO DISTURB --
SHH, TONY! YOU'LL WAKE THE OTHERS! NOW LISTEN TO ME -- YOU'RE NOT ONE OF MORGAN'S SERVANTS. YOU'RE AN AVENGER, AND --
I GOT JAN AND MONICA, CAP, EASY AS PIE. THEY'LL BE RIGHT --
-- AW, NO. YOU DIDN'T -- NOT HIM!
TONY.
IT SOUNDS CRAZY, TONY, BUT JUST LISTEN -- YOU'LL HEAR IT WITHIN YOU --
DON'T WORRY -- HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST OF US. HE'LL REMEMBER --
-- RIGHT, TONY?
DAYSTAR, PIXIE -- YOU'RE A PART OF THIS MADNESS AS WELL? I KNOW NOT HOW YOU'VE BEEN ENSORCELED --
-- NOR WHY YOU KEEP CALLING ME "TONY" --
I KNEW IT. HE'S NEVER GONNA GO FOR IT.
INDEED, LONGBOW -- YOU SPEAK MOST TRULY, THOUGH IN BIZARRE VOICE. WHATEVER THIS IS, I SHALL BE NO PARTY TO IT!
ANY WHO'D SEEK TO OVERTHROW OUR RIGHTFUL QUEEN MUST FIRST FACE SIR ANTHONY OF CUMBRIA --
-- AND MORE, THEY MUST FACE THE ENCHANTED ARMOR AND GOOD RIGHT ARM -- OF THE IRON KNIGHT!
CAPTAIN AMERICA STEPS FORWARD, INTENDING TO REASON FURTHER --

-- BUT AS HE DOES, A BOLT OF PURE MYSTIC FORCE DROWNS OUT ANY ATTEMPT AT SPEECH --
ZRAKAMM
AW, NUTS!
-- AND MOMENTS LATER, IN THE MEN'S BARRACKS BELOW...
WHKRMRH
Eh?
WHAT --?
IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE -- I THINK --
I COULD'VE TOLD YA, CAP -- IRON MAN'S A GOOD GUY, NORMALLY --
-- BUT HE'S WAAAY TOO INTO HIS WHOLE NOBLEMAN/LORD OF THE MANOR TRIP.
THAT SPELL MUSTA HIT HIM RIGHT WHERE HE LIVES!
I GUESS I SHOULD ASK YOUR OPINION MORE OFTEN WHEN IT COMES TO TEAM MATTERS, HAWKEYE.
FABULOUS -- I JUST WISH I WAS IN MORE OF A POSITION TO ENJOY HEARING THAT...
YEOMAN -- WHAT TRANSPIRES? ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?!

AND...
SQUADRON LEADERS -- SPEAK!
I WOULD KNOW WHAT OCCURS, AND I WOULD KNOW N--
-- Ah. YEOMAN. YOU HAVE EVERYTHING IN HAND, THEN?
IT WAS SO LOUD A BLAST -- THE SOUND OF IT CARRIED E'EN TO THE WOMEN'S BARRACKS! WE THOUGHT IT PICT SABOTAGE SURE!
GIGANTUS! GRIMALKIN! TRUST THE YEOMAN NOT -- NOR ANY OF THEM!
THEY ARE UNDER AN ENCHANTMENT -- AND DO SEEK TO BETRAY US ALL!
NO!
IT'S YOU WHO ARE UNDER A SPELL -- ALL OF YOU!
AND YOU'RE BETRAYING YOURSELVES!
YOU'RE AVENGERS -- AND DEEP INSIDE, UNDER MORGAN'S MAGIC, YOU KNOW IT! MAYBE YOU DON'T REMEMBER, BUT YOU CAN FEEL IT!
THERE'S A SPIRIT IN YOU -- OF HONOR, OF UNSWERVING LOYALTY TO THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM -- FOR ALL MEN, EVERYWHERE!
YOU'VE LIVED THAT SPIRIT, FOUGHT FOR IT -- UPHELD IT EVERY DAY OF YOUR LIVES! I'VE SEEN IT IN YOU -- IN ALL OF YOU!
DON'T LET MORGAN BLIND YOU TO IT!
OPEN YOURSELVES TO THAT SPIRIT -- TO FEEL WHAT YOU KNOW TO BE TRUE! YOU CAN FIND IT WITHIN YOU AGAIN --
-- I KNOW YOU CAN!

HE WATCHES THEIR FACES, THEN -- WATCHES AS HIS WORDS SINK IN --
-- AND THEY CONSIDER THE CHANCE THAT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, HE COULD BE SPEAKING THE TRUTH.
BUT PERHAPS THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM, OR PERHAPS THE SPELL IS TOO STRONG, FOR THEIR EXPRESSIONS WAVER --
-- AND A COLDNESS COMES INTO THEM --
-- AND JUST AS IT SEEMS THEY'RE ABOUT TO ATTACK --
YES!
I REMEMBER!
STAR-KNIGHT?!
IT'S NOT STAR-KNIGHT -- IT'S QUASAR!
AND I'M WITH YOU, CAP!
AS AM I.
S-SQUIRE JUSTICE? VANCE?
YES, ANGEL -- VANCE. I'M VANCE ASTROVIK, FROM SAUGERTIES, NEW YORK --
-- AND IF YOU JUST LET YOURSELF, YOU'LL REMEMBER WHO YOU REALLY ARE, TOO.
HE FELT IT? BUT -- HE'S NEVER BEEN AN AVENGER!
THAT'S NEVER BEEN A REQUIREMENT, CLINT -- OR DON'T YOU REMEMBER YOUR OWN EARLY DAYS?
ANYONE ELSE?

I --
THERE BE SUMMAT --
I CAN -- CAN ALMOST --
-- ALMOST FEEL IT -- IT'S LIKE --
-- LIKE -- A CALL --
YES!
TRUST THAT CALL -- BELIEVE IN IT! YOU CAN FIND YOUR WAY BACK -- YOU CAN!
BUT THEN, AS SWIFTLY AS SMOKE DISSOLVES ON THE SUMMER BREEZE --
NO!
YOU ARE TRAITORS -- ALL OF YOU!
KRANG
YOU SEEK TO BEWITCH US -- TO TURN US AGAINST OUR NOBLE QUEEN! AND NAMOR THE SEALORD, FOR ONE --
-- WILL BROOK YOUR PERFIDY NO LONGER!
-- THE MOMENT IS SHATTERED --
-- AND THE MOOD IN THE CHAMBER TURNS HOSTILE ONCE MORE.
OUT OF THE WAY, ARCHER!
NOT A CHANCE, SPOCK-EARS. YOU WANT CAP -- YOU'VE GOTTA GO THROUGH ME.
IF THAT'S HOW YOU'D HAVE IT. VENGEANCE --
-- LET'S TEACH THIS TRAITOR A LESSON HE'LL NEVER FORGET!
Uh...


MEANWHILE...
MORGAN!
MORGAN, IT'S HAPPENED, JUST AS I WARNED YOU! YOU'VE LOST ALL CONTROL OF THEM! IT'S ALL OVER THE CASTLE --
-- THE AVENGERS ARE REBELLING -- FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES!
THANK YOU, MY LOYAL SERVANT. WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? THEY'VE BROKEN FREE OF YOUR SPELL!
I HEARD YOU, MORDRED.
AND I'M SURE THAT, AS EVER, YOU ARE PANICKING NEEDLESSLY. STILL, COME ALONG --
-- WE'LL LOOK INTO IT.
BUT AS SHE GOES --
-- SHE FEELS IT AGAIN -- THAT STRANGE SENSATION --
-- AND IN THE DUNGEONS, WANDA FEELS THAT SHE'S REACHED SOMETHING -- THAT SHE'S MADE A SMALL, FRAGILE CONTACT --
-- AND SHE CONCENTRATES, CALLING HARDER -- REACHING FURTHER --

AND, OUTSIDE...
KBSH
THOOM
KRZAK
WHRAM
KRZAK
WHAT IN THE NAME OF --?
THAT -- THAT BUILDING! 'TIS THE VENGEANCE'S BARRACKS --
-- AND THAT COMMOTION, WHATE'ER IT IS -- IT'S GROWING LOUDER!
RUN, THEN! RUN, BEFORE --
KRSHKRAM!

FIREMAIDEN!
BEHIND YOU, QUASAR!
ZKAK
SKOW
THANKS, PHOTON! KEEP PRESSING -- WE CAN'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO RALLY!
SMITE HIM, KREATURE!
RAHR!
BZAT
CRIPES, BEAST! I'D THINK YOU'D BE ON OUR SIDE FOR SURE -- IF ONLY TO GET YOUR OLD VOCABULARY BACK!
SAVE YOUR ENERGY FOR FIGHTING, HAWKEYE -- AND KEEP THOSE ARROWS COMING!
INSOLENT POLTROON! I'LL SLAY YOU MYSELF!
YOU CAN TRY, IRON MAN -- BUT IT WON'T BE EASY! I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO FIGHT FOR, AND ALL YOU'VE GOT --
AND TO THINK I ONCE LOVED YOU! WE HAVE OUR QUEEN -- AND IN HER NAME, WE SHALL DESTROY YOU!
SPANG
NNH!
STOP AND THINK! YOU'LL REMEMBER -- YOU'LL REGAIN YOUR SENSES!
IT'S NOT TOO LATE, AVENGERS!
UNH!

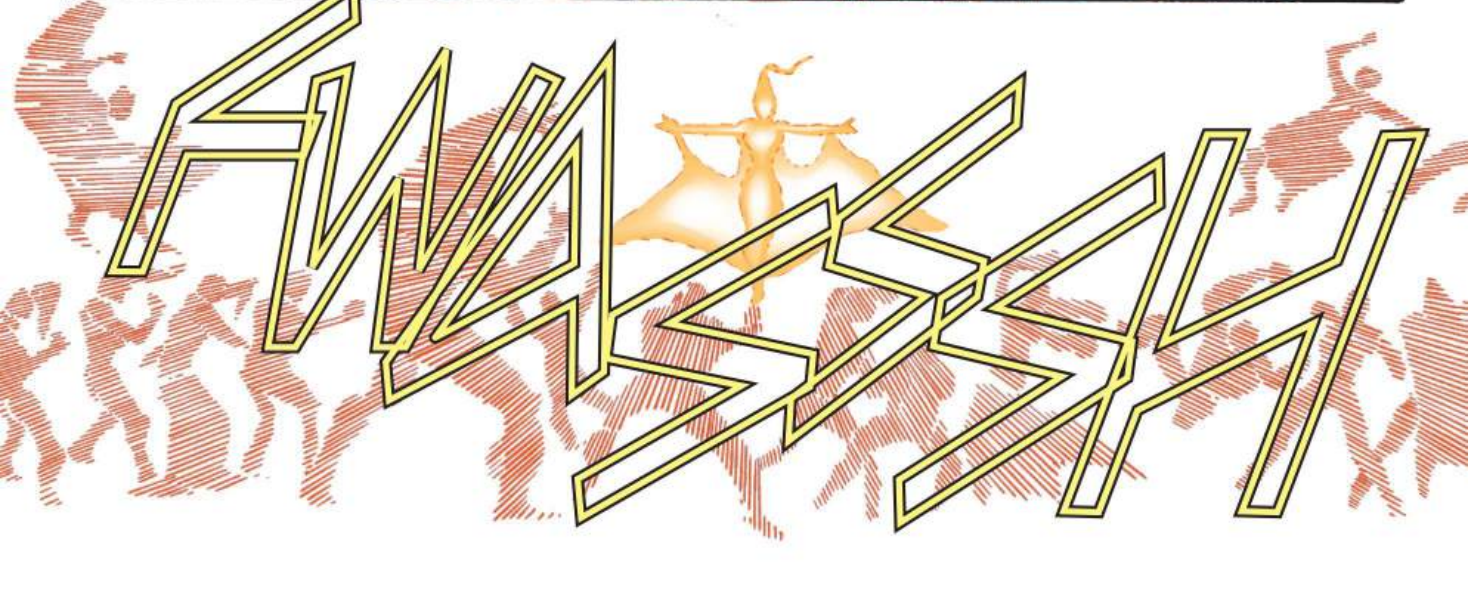
WHOAA!
YOU BATTLE MOST FIERCELY, LONGBOW -- AS EVER YOU HAVE! STILL, ALL YOUR SKILL IS AS NOTHING --
-- TO THE POWERS OF ELEMENTELLE!
Oh, MAN! I ASKED YOU TO DRAW 'EM TO ME TO TAKE SOME OF THE HEAT OFF THE OTHERS, PHOTON -- BUT I DIDN'T THINK THERE'D BE SO MANY!
WE CAN HANDLE IT, QUASAR! WE HAVE TO!
KSSH
KRAK
HERCULES! USAGENT! MACHINE MAN! I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU -- BUT IF YOU CAN'T BE TALKED INTO SEEING REASON...
HAHAHAHA!
YOU CAN'T SERIOUSLY BELIEVE YOU HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER THIS SITUATION, CAPTAIN! EVEN IF YOU COULD DEFEAT YOUR TEAM-MATES --
-- YOU'D STILL HAVE TO FACE ME!
PTAM
MORGAN!
IT'S NO GOOD, CAP! THERE'S JUST TOO MANY OF THEM!
FINE.
WE GO DOWN, THEN -- BUT WE GO DOWN FIGHTING!
THE AVENGERS DON'T SURRENDER -- NOT TO THIS! NOT TO HER!
MOVE IN, VENGEANCE. THESE RENEGADES CANNOT STAND AGAINST OUR ASSEMBLED MIGHT. MOVE IN, AND --
SHRAKKAK
EH? WHO --?

THOR!
AYE, WOMAN! NOT DONAR, BUT THOR --
-- THOR, GOD OF THUNDER -- WHO HATH HAD ENOUGH OF THY WITCHERIES!
LIKE THESE OTHERS, I AM MYSELF AGAIN -- AND MORE, I AM ANGRY!

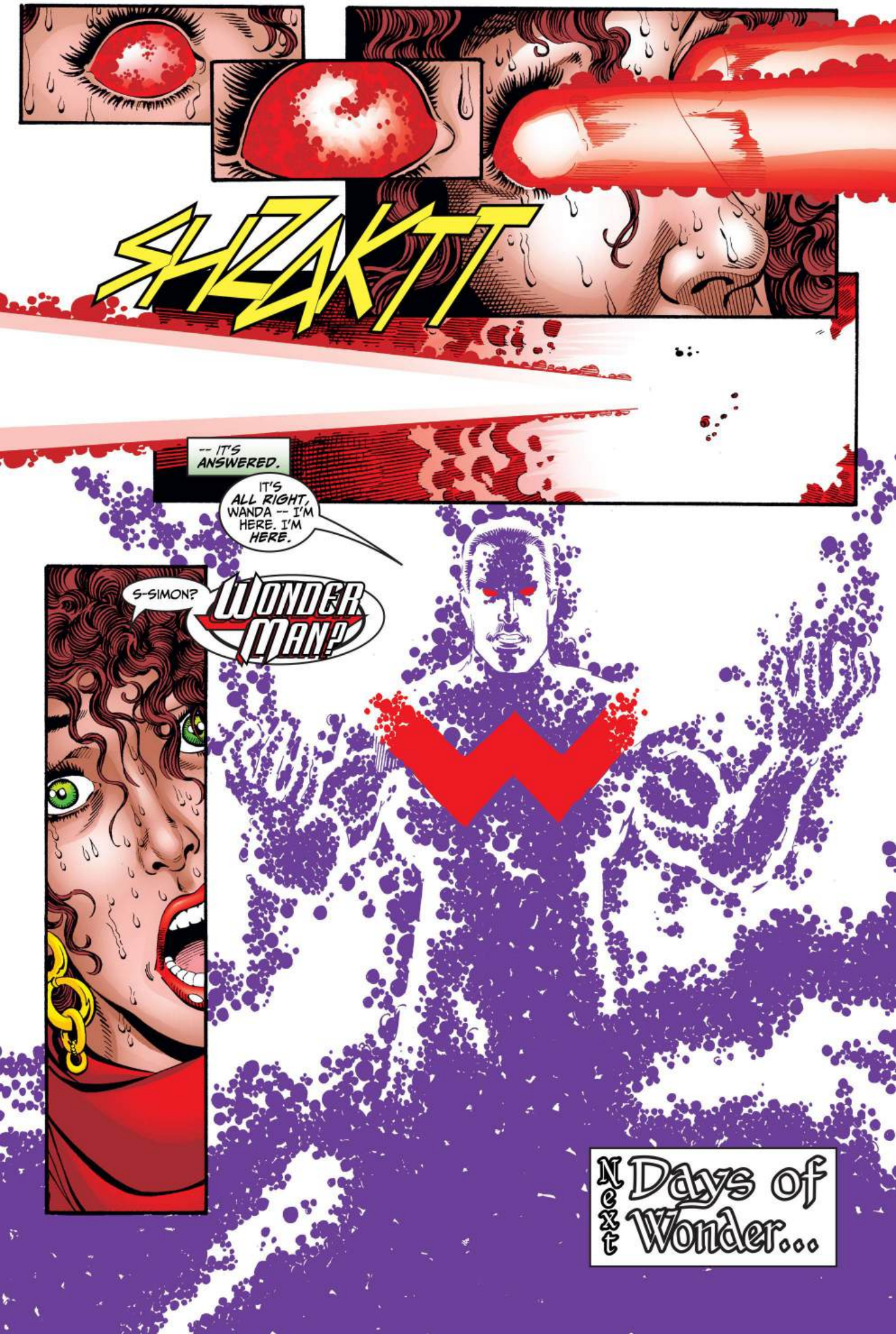
TAKE THY BAND AND GO, CAPTAIN AMERICA. SHOULD MORGAN OR HER THRALLS ATTEMPT TO PREVENT THY PASSAGE --
-- THEY WILL HAVE THE WRATH OF THOR TO CONTEND WITH!

YOU'RE AS BIG A FOOL AS HE IS, THUNDER GOD.
YOU THINK YOU CAN DEFEAT ME? IN MY STRONGHOLD -- AT THE VERY HEIGHT OF MY POWER?

SHE'S GOT A POINT.
THOR'S ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST POWERFUL OF US, MONICA, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF EVEN HE COULD BEAT HER ONE-ON-ONE.
WE COULD USE A DISTRACTION.
SAY NO MORE, CAP.
IT'S DONE.


AVENGERS

AND ONCE THE DAZZLE FADES...
BLINDED US! THE LIGHT-WITCH BLINDED US!
AND COVERED OUR FOES' ESCAPE IN THE PROCESS, LADY MAGDALENA.
AYE, SIR MACHINERY. THE STAR-KNIGHT LEVITATED THEM, NO DOUBT -- OVER THE WALL AND INTO THE FORESTS BEYOND.
THEY'LL LOSE THEMSELVES EASILY IN THE WOODLAND SHADOWS.
WELL, THIS IS A PRETTY PICTURE, ISN'T IT? THE QUEEN'S VENGEANCE, OUTMATCHED BY A MERE SIX OF THEIR NUMBER --
-- AND LEFT TO LOOK LIKE FOOLS BEFORE THEIR MISTRESS!
MY LADY QUEEN!
GIVE US LEAVE TO PURSUE THEM! WE'LL HARRY THEM THROUGH THE WOODS, WITHOUT RESPITE OR SURCEASE, UNTIL --
NO, PRIESTESS SELENE. LET THEM GO. IT'LL BE GOOD SPORT, LATER, TO HUNT THEM DOWN --
-- FAR, FAR MORE SATISFYING THAN THE PICTS --!
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES, AUNT? TO LET THEM ROAM FREE --?
IT CANNOT BE MY BLOOD RUNNING IN YOUR VEINS, MORDRED -- IT CANNOT!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT I CONTROL REALITY ITSELF? SO LONG AS WE HOLD BOTH THE TWILIGHT SWORD AND THE SCARLET WITCH --
-- WE ARE IN NO DANGER. I CAN RESHAPE THE COSMOS ANY TIME I DESIRE --
"-- AND MAKE THEM MY SLAVES ONCE MORE!"
AND IN THE DUNGEONS, UNAWARE OF WHAT HAS OCCURRED --
-- THE SCARLET WITCH CONTINUES TO SEND OUT HER CALL -- PROJECTING IT THROUGH THE VERY FABRIC OF ALL THAT IS -- OF ALL THAT EVER WAS --
-- AND THEN, SUDDENLY --


SHZAKTT
-- IT'S ANSWERED.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, WANDA -- I'M HERE. I'M HERE.
S-SIMON?
WONDER MAN?
Next Days of Wonder...

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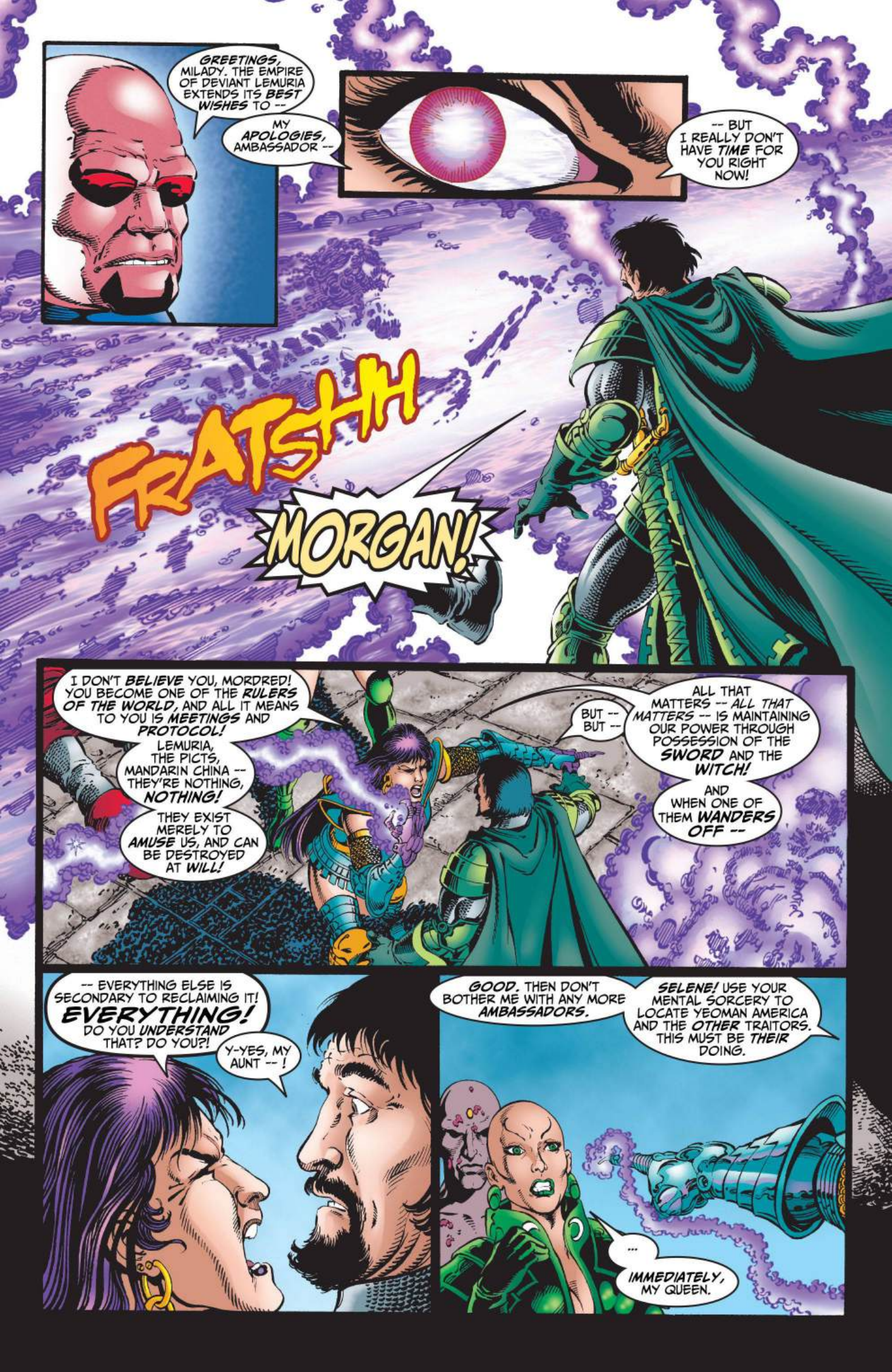
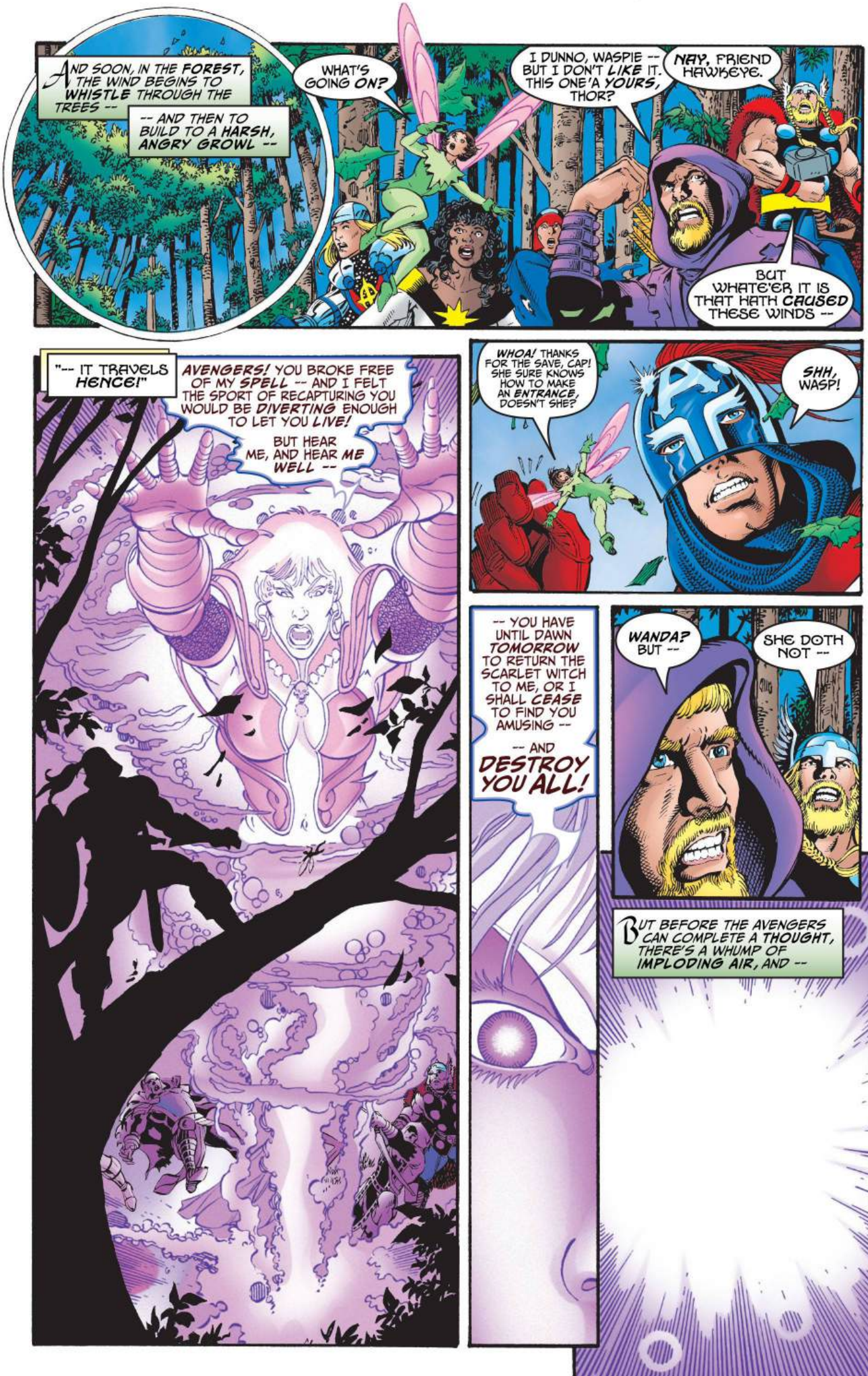
-- FOR WHEREVER THEY ARE -- THE AVENGERS MUST BE PREPARED.
NOT BAD. BUT ENOUGH SOLO WORK -- LET'S TRY SOME TEAMWORK DRILLS.
NOT BAD, CAP? WITH OUR POWERS? SURE, YOUR SIDE'S GOT THOR, BUT--
POWER ISN'T EVERYTHING, QUASAR. YOU COULD HAVE QUANTUM-ARMORED UP, FOR INSTANCE -- IF THE WASP HAD LET YOU CONCENTRATE.
POINT TAKEN.
AND PHOTON-- DON'T DEPEND SO MUCH ON INTANGIBILITY. WHAT IF HAWKEYE COULD HAVE DISRUPTED YOU?
AYE-AYE, SIR.
NICE EVASIVE WORK, JUSTICE.
SHEER TERROR'LL DO THAT, SIR. IF I'D DONE IT YESTERDAY, MAYBE I'D--
DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF, VANCE.
"WE WERE UP AGAINST OVER TWO DOZEN MIND-CONTROLLED AVENGERS, AND WE ESCAPED* -- THAT'S NO SMALL FEAT. BE PROUD OF IT."
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM
SO, CAP-- HOW DOES IT FEEL TO LEAD THE MERRY MEN OF SHERWOOD?
ROBIN HOOD? I'D HAVE --
YOU'D HAVE SAID KING ARTHUR.
BUT FACE IT -- MEDIEVAL WORLD, SMALL BAND OF OUTLAWS, USURPER -- IT'S ROBIN HOOD ALL THE WAY.
SO WHEN DO WE DRESS UP LIKE MONKS AND SNEAK INTO THE CASTLE?
CREEPING AROUND LIKE THAT ISN'T MY WAY, HAWKEYE.
THEN... WHAT IS, CAP? WHAT DO WE DO?
WE WAIT FOR LEFAY TO MAKE A MISTAKE, AND WE FREE THE OTHERS.
AND YOU'RE SURE SHE'LL SLIP UP? SHE'S DONE PRETTY WELL SO FAR.
IF SHE COULD WORK WITHIN A FUNCTIONING SYSTEM, SHE'D HAVE ACHIEVED SUCCESS WITHIN SOCIETY, INSTEAD OF BREAKING ALL THE RULES.
SHE'LL SLIP UP-- COUNT ON IT.

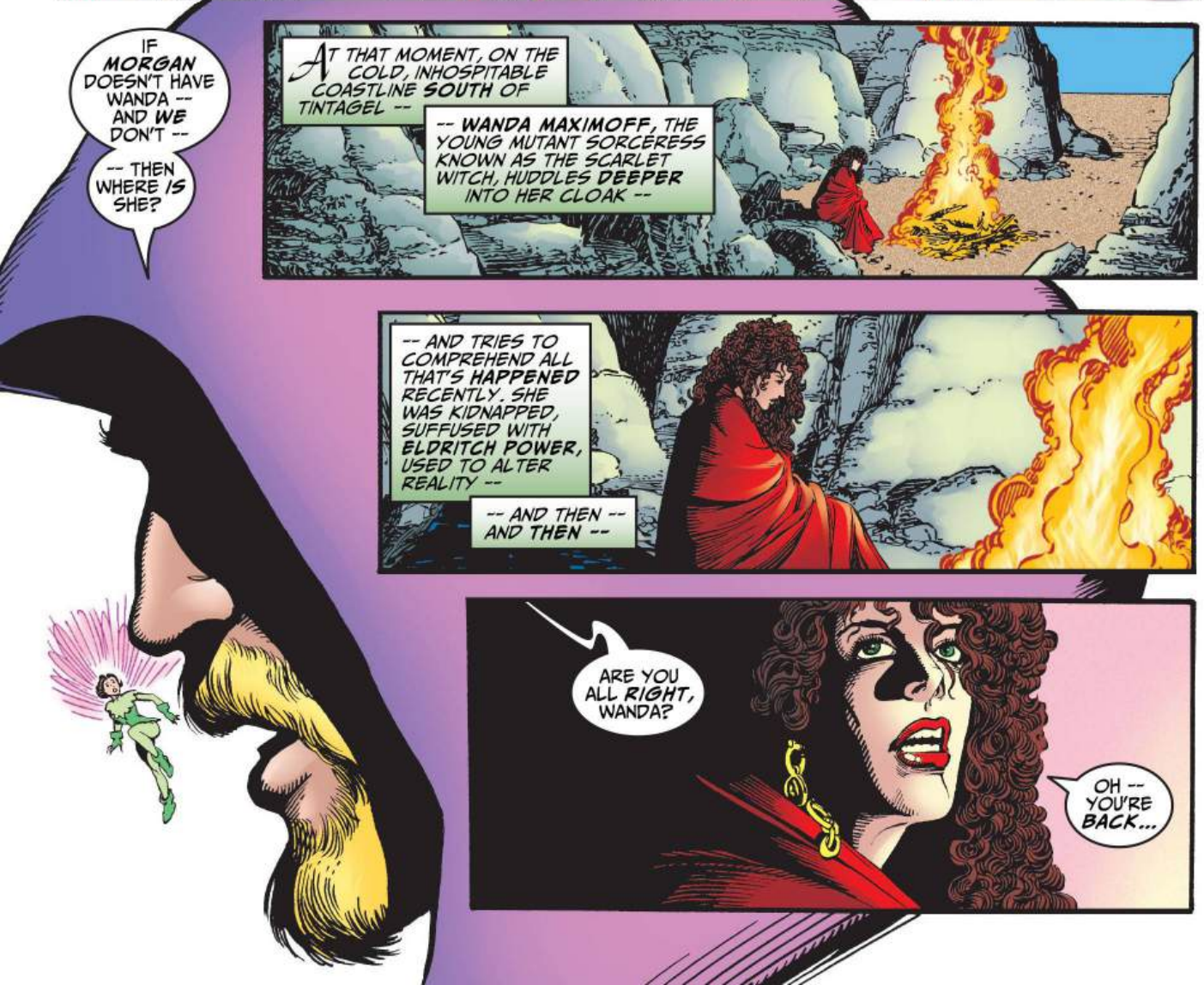
Stan Lee Presents: ONCE AN AVENGER...
Part 3
Fata Morgana
by Kurt Busiek & George Perez
Al Vey & Tom Smith
DS & Comicraft
Digital Chameleon
Tom Brevoort
Bob Harras
NOW LISTEN CLOSELY, YOU IGNORANT PIECE OF FILTH, BECAUSE I'M ONLY GOING TO SAY THIS ONCE.
I ESCAPED THE REBIRTH OF ATTILAN. I CALLED THE DENIZENS OF RUINED ASGARD TO EARTH. I STOLE THE MYSTIC NORN STONES FROM THIN AIR!
AND WITH THEIR POWER, AND THAT OF THE APOCALYPTIC TWILIGHT SWORD, I REMADE THE WORLD -- REMADE IT IN MY IMAGE!*
I, MORGAN LE FAY, RULE REALITY -- AND THE MIGHTY AVENGERS SERVE ME AS MY LOYAL SLAVES! AND ALL THIS SPECTACLE, ALL THIS MAJESTY --
-- IT DEPENDS ON TWO THINGS ONLY. THE TWILIGHT SWORD -- AND THE POWER OF THE SCARLET WITCH, WHICH ALLOWS ME TO WIELD IT!
SO TELL ME, YOU DROOLING IMBECILE. TELL ME THE ONE THING IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW. I HAVE THE TWILIGHT SWORD --
* LET'S SEE -- THAT'D COVER THE AFTERMATHS OF FANTASTIC FOUR: ATLANTIS RISING #2 AND JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #514, AS WELL AS MARVEL TEAM-UP #4, OUR LAST TWO ISSUES AND A HOST OF OTHER MARVEL MILESTONES!
-- REFERENCE-HAPPY TOM

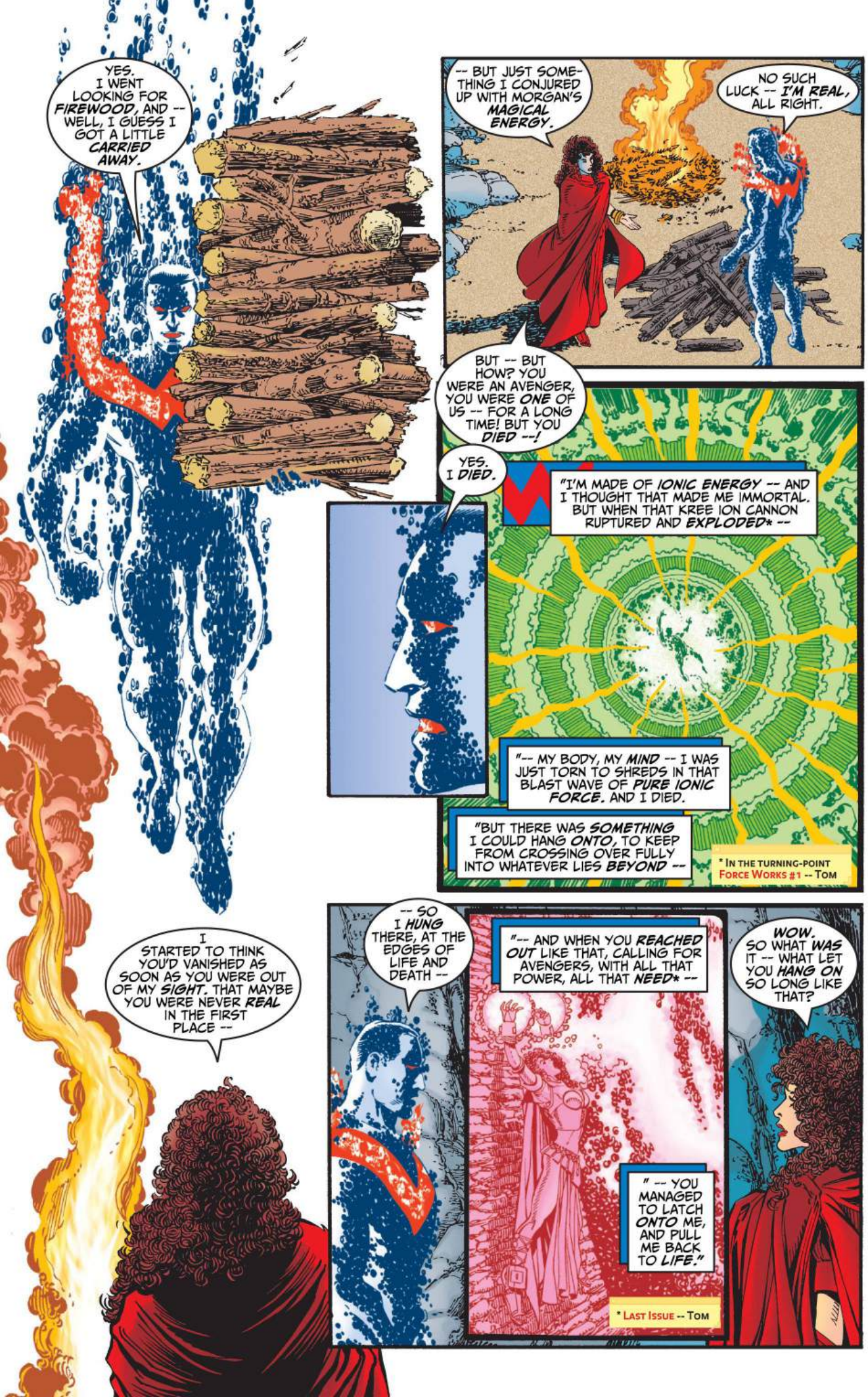
-- BUT WHERE -- IS -- THE SCARLET -- WITCH?!
I -- I -- PLEASE--
I AM IN HIS MIND, MY LADY QUEEN -- AND IT IS AN UNPLEASANT CESSPOOL OF FETID, FRAGMENTARY THOUGHTS.
I DON'T CARE WHAT IT'S LIKE, PRIESTESS SELENE -- ONLY WHAT IT HOLDS. TELL ME.
-- P-PLEASE --
-- HURTS --
HE KNOWS NOTHING. HE LEFT HIS POST TO RELIEVE HIMSELF, AND WHEN HE DID RETURN, THERE WAS A GREAT HOLE IN THE WALL OF THE CELL --
-- AND THE PRISONER HAD VANISHED.
BAH!
HE'S OF NO USE TO ME WHATSOEVER, THEN.
BLTCH
MORGAN!
EH? MORDRED--?!
MORGAN, THE AMBASSADOR HERE HAS BEEN WAITING!
HE'S TRAVELED ALL THE WAY FROM LEMURIA, TO SUE FOR PEACE BETWEEN OUR EMPIRES -- BUT YOU MISSED THE APPOINTMENT!
YOU CAN'T SIMPLY IGNORE MATTERS OF STATE LIKE THIS!


GREETINGS, MILADY. THE EMPIRE OF DEVIANT LEMURIA EXTENDS ITS BEST WISHES TO --
MY APOLOGIES, AMBASSADOR --
-- BUT I REALLY DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU RIGHT NOW!
FRATSHH
MORGAN!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU, MORDRED! YOU BECOME ONE OF THE RULERS OF THE WORLD, AND ALL IT MEANS TO YOU IS MEETINGS AND PROTOCOL!
LEMURIA, THE PICTS, MANDARIN CHINA -- THEY'RE NOTHING, NOTHING!
THEY EXIST MERELY TO AMUSE US, AND CAN BE DESTROYED AT WILL!
BUT -- BUT --
ALL THAT MATTERS -- ALL THAT MATTERS -- IS MAINTAINING OUR POWER THROUGH POSSESSION OF THE SWORD AND THE WITCH!
AND WHEN ONE OF THEM WANDERS OFF --
-- EVERYTHING ELSE IS SECONDARY TO RECLAIMING IT! EVERYTHING! DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? DO YOU?!
Y-YES, MY AUNT -- !
GOOD. THEN DON'T BOTHER ME WITH ANY MORE AMBASSADORS.
SELENE! USE YOUR MENTAL SORCERY TO LOCATE YEOMAN AMERICA AND THE OTHER TRAITORS. THIS MUST BE THEIR DOING.
...
IMMEDIATELY, MY QUEEN.


AND SOON, IN THE FOREST, THE WIND BEGINS TO WHISTLE THROUGH THE TREES --
-- AND THEN TO BUILD TO A HARSH, ANGRY GROWL --
WHAT'S GOING ON?
I DUNNO, WASPIE -- BUT I DON'T LIKE IT. THIS ONE'A YOURS, THOR?
NAY, FRIEND HAWKEYE.
BUT WHATE'ER IT IS THAT HATH CAUSED THESE WINDS --
"-- IT TRAVELS HENCE!"
AVENGERS! YOU BROKE FREE OF MY SPELL -- AND I FELT THE SPORT OF RECAPTURING YOU WOULD BE DIVERTING ENOUGH TO LET YOU LIVE!
BUT HEAR ME, AND HEAR ME WELL --
WHOA! THANKS FOR THE SAVE, CAP! SHE SURE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE, DOESN'T SHE?
SHH, WASP!
-- YOU HAVE UNTIL DAWN TOMORROW TO RETURN THE SCARLET WITCH TO ME, OR I SHALL CEASE TO FIND YOU AMUSING --
-- AND DESTROY YOU ALL!
WANDA? BUT --
SHE DOTH NOT --
BUT BEFORE THE AVENGERS CAN COMPLETE A THOUGHT, THERE'S A WHUMP OF IMPLODING AIR, AND --

SHE HATH VANISHED!
SO, AH, ANYONE KNOW WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT?
IT'S SIMPLE, QUASAR.
SHE'S MADE HER MISTAKE, AND SHE'S RUNNING SCARED. WE'LL STRIKE TONIGHT.
UH -- THAT WAS "RUNNING SCARED"?
IT WAS TO CAPTAIN AMERICA, JUSTICE. HANG AROUND WITH US LONG ENOUGH, AND YOU'LL GET USED TO HIM.
NO DISRESPECT, PHOTON -- BUT I DOUBT I'LL EVER GET USED TO THAT --!
WELL, FINE. WE'RE GOOD TO GO -- BUT THERE'S STILL ONE THING I'D LIKE TO KNOW...
YEAH, WASPIE -- I WAS THINKIN' THE SAME THING.


IF MORGAN DOESN'T HAVE WANDA -- AND WE DON'T --
-- THEN WHERE IS SHE?
AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE COLD, INHOSPITABLE COASTLINE SOUTH OF TINTAGEL --
-- WANDA MAXIMOFF, THE YOUNG MUTANT SORCERESS KNOWN AS THE SCARLET WITCH, HUDDLES DEEPER INTO HER CLOAK --
-- AND TRIES TO COMPREHEND ALL THAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY. SHE WAS KIDNAPPED, SUFFUSED WITH ELDRITCH POWER, USED TO ALTER REALITY --
-- AND THEN -- AND THEN --
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, WANDA?
OH -- YOU'RE BACK...


YES. I WENT LOOKING FOR FIREWOOD, AND -- WELL, I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY.
-- BUT JUST SOMETHING I CONJURED UP WITH MORGAN'S MAGICAL ENERGY.
NO SUCH LUCK -- I'M REAL, ALL RIGHT.
BUT -- BUT HOW? YOU WERE AN AVENGER, YOU WERE ONE OF US -- FOR A LONG TIME! BUT YOU DIED --!
YES. I DIED.
"I'M MADE OF IONIC ENERGY -- AND I THOUGHT THAT MADE ME IMMORTAL. BUT WHEN THAT KREE ION CANNON RUPTURED AND EXPLODED* --
"-- MY BODY, MY MIND -- I WAS JUST TORN TO SHREDS IN THAT BLAST WAVE OF PURE IONIC FORCE. AND I DIED.
"BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD HANG ONTO, TO KEEP FROM CROSSING OVER FULLY INTO WHATEVER LIES BEYOND --
* IN THE TURNING-POINT FORCE WORKS #1 -- TOM
I STARTED TO THINK YOU'D VANISHED AS SOON AS YOU WERE OUT OF MY SIGHT. THAT MAYBE YOU WERE NEVER REAL IN THE FIRST PLACE --
-- SO I HUNG THERE, AT THE EDGES OF LIFE AND DEATH --
"-- AND WHEN YOU REACHED OUT LIKE THAT, CALLING FOR AVENGERS, WITH ALL THAT POWER, ALL THAT NEED* --
" -- YOU MANAGED TO LATCH ONTO ME, AND PULL ME BACK TO LIFE."
* LAST ISSUE -- TOM
WOW. SO WHAT WAS IT -- WHAT LET YOU HANG ON SO LONG LIKE THAT?

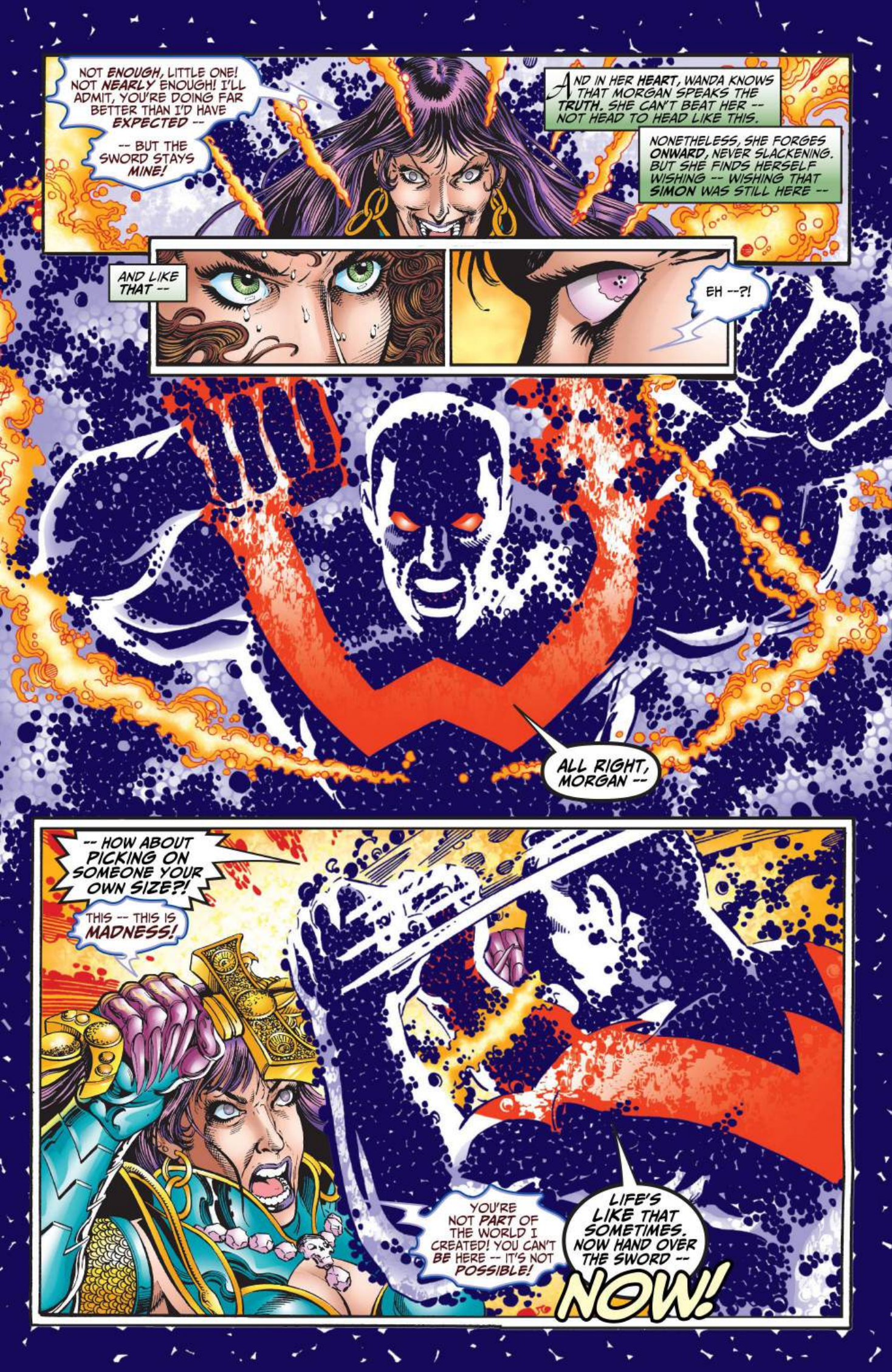
IT'S...IT'S NOT REALLY IMPORTANT.
IF YOU SAY SO. MAYBE WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT LATER.
BUT RIGHT NOW, WE'D BETTER MAKE SOME PLANS -- FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIND THE OTHER AVENGERS, HOW TO OVERTURN MORGAN'S MAGIC.
AND RAISING THE DEAD REALLY TAKES IT OUT OF ME, SO IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS, FEEL FREE TO SPEAK RIGHT UP.
SIMON? THAT WAS A JOKE, SIMON.
SIMON? WONDER MAN?
BUT HE'S VANISHED, ALMOST AS IF HE WERE NEVER THERE. AND WANDA MAXIMOFF SUDDENLY FEELS COLDER --
LATER, AS THE SUN SLIPS BENEATH THE WESTERN HORIZON...
STATE YOUR BUSINESS.
PEDLAR, SIR -- WI' FINE CLOTHS FOR TH' MARKET T'MORRAH.
FINE CLOTHS? CHEAP, ROUGH RAGS, AN' I'M ANY JUDGE. BUT PASS IN, PASS IN.
YOUR BUSINESS?
TRAVELING MONKS, MY LORD -- ON OUR WAY FROM ST. IVES TO ILFRACOMBE, SEEKING SANCTUARY FOR THE NIGHT.
WE BLESS YOUR FINE LADY FOR HER HOSPI--
PASS IN, PASS IN -- JUST CEASE THY PRIESTLY PRATTLE!
SEE, CAP? I TOLD YOU! DRESS UP AS MONKS -- IT WORKS EVERY TIME!
JUST REMEMBER THE PLAN, HAWKEYE -- FIND THE TWILIGHT SWORD, SO THOR CAN TRY TO BREAK MORGAN'S HOLD ON IT.
ONCE THAT'S DONE, WE CAN AFFORD TO LOOK FOR WAN --
HOLD, TRAITORS!
UH, HAWKEYE? ABOUT THIS MONK THING?

"BAD IDEA!"
QUEEN'S VENGEANCE --
-- SLAY THEM!
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE OTHERS BARELY HAVE TIME TO REGISTER THE HATE IN THEIR FORMER COMRADES' EYES, AND TO BRACE THEMSELVES --
-- BEFORE --
UH-OH! NO OFFENSE, QUICKSILVER --
-- BUT YOUR SPEED MAKES YOU WAY TOO DANGEROUS NOT TO DEAL WITH FIRST!
A WISE CHOICE, JANET VAN DYNE --
UHH!
-- WHILE I SHALL DEFEND 'GAINST IRON MAN AND MAGDALENE!
SORRY, CAP. I THOUGHT IT'D WORK -- BUT I GUESS THEY ALWAYS DO GET DISCOVERED IN THOSE PICTURES...
ACTUALLY, CLINT, I PREFER IT THIS WAY. EVERYTHING'S OUT IN THE OPEN -- WE KNOW WHERE WE STAND --
-- AND WE GET ANOTHER CRACK AT SNAPPING THE REST OF THE AVENGERS OUT OF THE SPELL!
I'LL TELL YOU, QUASAR -- I STILL CAN'T GET OVER THE FACT THAT THESE ARE THE AVENGERS WE'RE FIGHTING.
I MEAN -- THE AVENGERS!
I'VE BEEN THERE MYSELF, JUSTICE -- BUT KEEP FIGHTING!
HOW CAN WE PREVAIL, JAN? CAP DOESN'T SEEM WORRIED, BUT THEN, HE NEVER DOES!
AND -- THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM--!
WE'RE AVENGERS, MONICA -- WE'LL FIND A WAY!
ER, SORRY 'BOUT THAT, HONEY!

THE BATTLE RAGES FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY, MOMENTUM SHIFTING BACK AND FORTH, BUT NO CLEAR VICTOR EMERGING.
THE QUEENS VENGEANCE HAS THE ADVANTAGE IN SHEER NUMBERS --
KRANG
-- BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA'S BAND IS MORE MOBILE, AND MORE DESPERATE --
UM, SORRY, FALCON -- BUT IF YOU EVER COME TO YOUR SENSES, YOU'LL THANK ME. I HOPE.
BY THE UNI-MIND, BRATLING-- DO YOU NEVER STAY STILL?!
AND SO IT GOES, AND SO IT GOES.
AH-AH! NO DICE, STINGRAY!
AND THEN ABOVE IT ALL, THERE IS SUDDEN, MERRY -- LAUGHTER?!
AH -- THIS IS WHAT MAKES IT WORTH IT! CAPTAIN AMERICA AGAINST HIS FELLOWS, THE PENDRAGON ON MY SIDE.
HERE IS THE TWILIGHT SWORD, CAPTAIN -- CAN YOU TAKE IT FROM ME?
ARE YOU MAD, MORGAN? JUST DESTROY THEM!
I TOLD YOU WE SHOULDN'T HAVE INVOLVED THE AVENGERS -- JUST KIDNAPPED THE SCARLET WITCH!
MORDRED --
-- ENOUGH!
THE AVENGERS HAD TO BE INVOLVED, MORDRED! WHAT GOOD IS TRIUMPH WITH NO ONE TO TRIUMPH OVER? WHAT GOOD IS VICTORY WITHOUT RISK?
IF ALL YOU CAN DO IS WORRY AND FRET, AND TELL ME I SHOULD SLINK ABOUT LIKE SOME COWERING DOG --
-- THEN LET YOUR TONGUE BE STILL!

GO AHEAD, LE FAY -- SILENCE HIM! BUT IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE -- HE'S STILL RIGHT!
BECAUSE THE AVENGERS WILL NEVER GIVE UP! WE'LL NEVER STOP FIGHTING -- WE'LL BEAT YOU NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES!
OH, REALLY, CAPTAIN AMERICA? AND JUST HOW, PRAY TELL, DO YOU PROPOSE TO WIN?
FOR ALL MY NEPHEW'S TWITCHING AND WHINING, I'M QUITE SECURE! WHEN I REMADE THE WORLD, I RESERVED ALL MYSTIC POWER TO MYSELF!
AND I CAN'T BE BEATEN BY ANY OTHER MEANS! SO WHO CAN TRULY CHALLENGE ME, EH? WHO?!
FZAKKT
UHH!
WH-WHO --?
I CAN CHALLENGE YOU, MORGAN!
HEY, ALL RIGHT!
I -- THE SCARLET WITCH!
I CAN -- AND I WILL!

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HAPPY I AM TO SEE YOU, LITTLE WITCH. WITH YOU BACK IN MY GRASP, I CAN WIELD THE SWORD AGAIN --
-- REORDER REALITY ONCE MORE, EXACTLY AS I CHOOSE! YOU HAVEN'T SAVED YOUR TEAMMATES -- YOU'VE DOOMED THEM!
SO THERE IS SOMEONE IN THIS WORLD WITH THE POWER TO DEFEAT YOU --
-- AND BELIEVE ME, SHE'S GOING TO!
A PRETTY SPEECH, GYPSY GIRL -- BUT IT'LL DO YOU NO GOOD! YOU MAY BE ABLE TO TINGE YOUR HEX-BOLTS WITH MY MAGICKS --
-- BUT NOT ENOUGH TO HURT ME!
I'VE GOT FOURTEEN CENTURIES OF EXPERIENCE, OF TRAINING, OF PRACTICE! YOU'VE HAD A FEW HALF-FORGOTTEN LESSONS IN SOME MINOR TRICKS!
ONLY IF YOU CAPTURE ME, MORGAN -- BUT THIS TIME, I'M READY FOR YOU!
YOU INFUSED ME WITH YOUR MAGIC -- SO MY MUTANT POWER COULD BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN YOUR POWER AND THE SWORD'S!*
*IN #1 -- TOM
YOU THINK YOU CAN MATCH MY ABILITIES WITH THAT?!
I -- I CAN TRY --!
DO IT, WANDA!
SHE'S JUST TALK! YOU'RE AN AVENGER! LET HER KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!
THE SCARLET WITCH CONCENTRATES, BEARING DOWN WITH ALL HER WILL. AND SHE FEELS HER MIND MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SWORD --
-- FEELS SOMETHING THERE, SOMETHING SHE CAN COMMUNICATE WITH --
-- BUT --


NOT ENOUGH, LITTLE ONE! NOT NEARLY ENOUGH! I'LL ADMIT, YOU'RE DOING FAR BETTER THAN I'D HAVE EXPECTED --
-- BUT THE SWORD STAYS MINE!
AND IN HER HEART, WANDA KNOWS THAT MORGAN SPEAKS THE TRUTH. SHE CAN'T BEAT HER -- NOT HEAD TO HEAD LIKE THIS.
NONETHELESS, SHE FORGES ONWARD, NEVER SLACKENING. BUT SHE FINDS HERSELF WISHING -- WISHING THAT SIMON WAS STILL HERE --
AND LIKE THAT --
EH --?!
ALL RIGHT, MORGAN --
-- HOW ABOUT PICKING ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE?!
THIS -- THIS IS MADNESS!
YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE WORLD I CREATED! YOU CAN'T BE HERE -- IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
LIFE'S LIKE THAT SOMETIMES. NOW HAND OVER THE SWORD --
NOW!

MEANWHILE, BELOW...
WHAMM
THAT -- THAT CAN'T BE WONDER MAN UP THERE -- CAN IT?
I MEAN -- THE NEW WARRIORS' BATTLES GOT A LITTLE WILD SOMETIMES, BUT THIS IS -- THIS IS WAY MORE THAN I'M USED TO!
SQUAWKK-!
HUHH!
AND THEN, VANCE ASTROVIK'S MIND EXPLODES WITH SEARING PAIN, AND HIS WORLD GOES RED --
-- BUT AS SWIFTLY AS IT BEGAN --
K-AKKH!
KLOK
WH-WHAT? WHO -- WHO DID --?
IT'S ME, KID -- IT'S D-MAN. I JUST KINDA...WOKE UP.
HER POWER -- SHE MUST BE POURING SO MUCH INTO HER BATTLE WITH WONDER MAN -- THAT HER HOLD ON THE AVENGERS IS WEAKENING!
SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT, I GUESS. WHATEVER.
"-- I HOPE IT'S ENOUGH --!"
SUCH BIG TALK, WONDER MAN! THE IONIC MAN -- STRONG, FAST, INDESTRUCTIBLE -- BUT I DON'T THINK YOU CAN HANDLE THIS!
I -- I NEED MORE POWER -- MORE STRENGTH! WANDA!

SHE GRITS HER TEETH AND FURROWS HER BROW, FUNNELING ENERGY INTO HIM. AND NOT JUST MORGAN'S POWER --
-- BUT HER OWN WILL, HER OWN STRENGTH. BUT STILL --
IT'S NOT -- NOT ENOUGH --
THEN TAKE MY STRENGTH, TOO -- FOR WHATEVER IT'S WORTH!
QUASAR?
A THOUGHT -- AND THE CORONA OF ENERGY AROUND HER EXPANDS TO INCLUDE HIM.
TAKE MINE AS WELL, WANDA. WHATEVER YOU NEED, WHATEVER IT TAKES.
WE'RE WITH YOU.
INDEED WE ARE.
WHA --?
WELL, WELL. WELCOME BACK, OLD FRIEND.
THANKS, CAP. WHATEVER MORGAN DID TO US --
WHATEVER SHE DID TO US, SHE'LL PAY FOR IT TENFOLD!
SHOW HER, MY SISTER! SHOW HER HOW AN AVENGER FIGHTS!
I Do Not Know How You Are Chanelling Such Disparate Energies, Wanda -- But Take Mine, As Well.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW! WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU BEAT MORGAN! DO IT!
WE'RE WITH YOU, WANDA!
WE'RE ALL WITH YOU!
YOU HEAR THAT, MORGAN? IT'S YOUR MAGICAL ENERGY LINK LETTING ME LINK EVERYONE -- BUT IT'S OUR STRENGTH FUELING IT! OURS!
THE AVENGERS ARE BACK -- AND YOU'RE GOING DOWN!

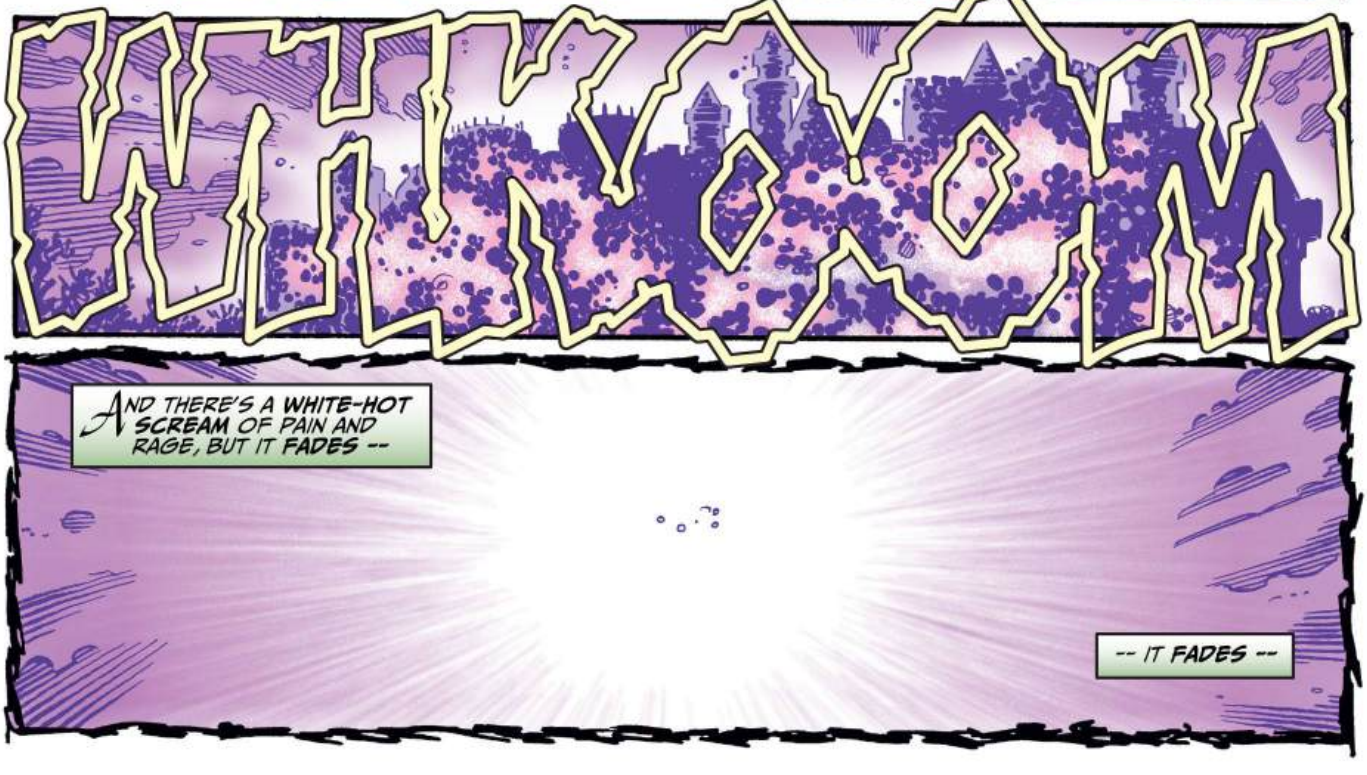
YES! KEEP IT UP, WANDA!
POUR IT ON!
N-NO --
I WON'T -- I WON'T STAND FOR THIS -- I WON'T PERMIT IT --
SHE'S WEAKENING, WANDA! WE CAN DO IT -- WE CAN BEAT HER!
JUST DON'T SLACK OFF! GO! GO!

NO!!
I WON'T LET YOU DO THIS! I WON'T LET YOU UNITE LIKE THIS -- WON'T LET YOU DEFEAT ME!
I'LL BREAK YOUR PATTERN FIRST! BREAK IT -- AND KILL YOU ALL!
KWAM
UHH!
WHOA! TRES IMPOLITE!
KRAM
BEAST!
USAGENT!
I'M OKAY, RAGE -- MY SHIELD CAN TAKE IT!
KRAK
BUT -- SHE'S SPLITTING US UP!
QUICKLY, WANDA! BEFORE YOU LOSE POWER! YOU KNOW -- WHAT TO DO!
I'M -- I'M AN AVENGER! I'M -- READY!
AND SHE KNOWS WHAT HE'S ASKING. MORE POWER -- MORE THAN EVEN HIS FORM CAN CONTAIN.
SHE KNOWS WHAT IT'LL DO TO HIM -- AND SHE CAN'T -- SHE CAN'T --
KRAMM
WHAT?! VISION?
VISION!

THAT WAS A MISTAKE, MORGAN -- YOUR LAST MISTAKE!
BECAUSE BOTTOM LINE -- WE'RE ALL AVENGERS HERE! AND AVENGERS --
-- DO WHAT IT TAKES!

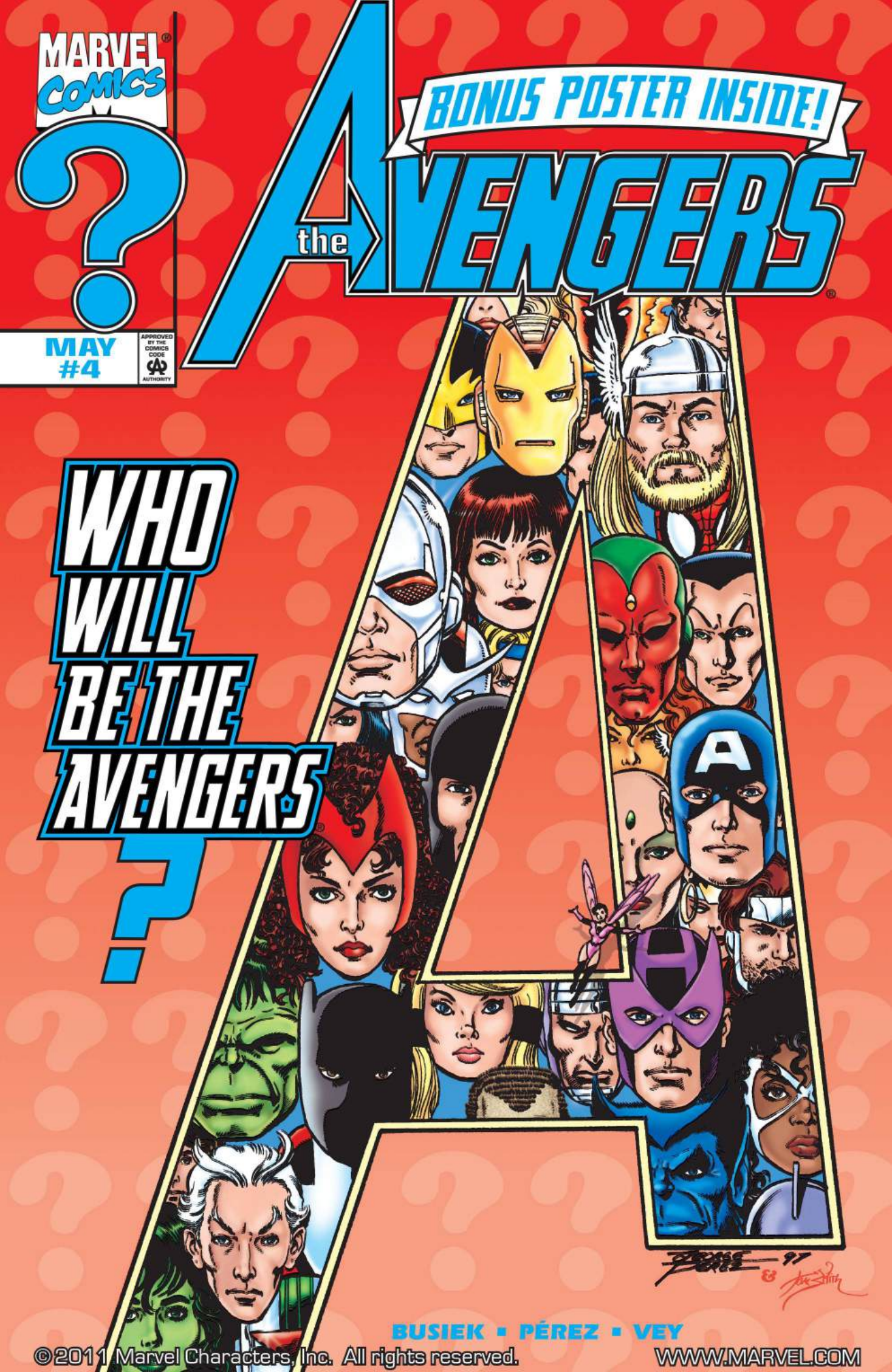
AND FUELED BY A COLD DETERMINATION, HER POWER SURGES UPWARD -- AND AS MORGAN FEELS CONTROL OF THE SWORD SLIPPING AWAY --
-- WONDER MAN FEELS THE SURGE RIP THROUGH HIS BODY, ESCALATING OUT OF CONTROL --

FORGIVE ME, SIMON.
NO! NO!
YES!


WHOOOM
AND THERE'S A WHITE-HOT SCREAM OF PAIN AND RAGE, BUT IT FADES --
-- IT FADES --

-- AND WHEN IT DOES --
WE -- WE'RE BACK TO NORMAL!
AND LOOKING GOOD, BIG GUY!
WE'RE BACK -- AT MODERN DAY TINTAGEL HEAD! THERE'S THE QUINJET!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, HERCULES? THAT BLAST OF MORGAN'S --
I -- I AM FINE, FIRESTAR. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN.
GIANT-MAN! IRON MAN! THE VISION NEEDS YOUR HELP! GET OVER THERE, NOW -- SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR HIM!
ON OUR WAY, CAP.
HE WAS -- HE WAS SHATTERED --
PLEASE, SERSI-- USE YOUR TRANSMUTATION POWERS --
I'M DOING WHAT I CAN, WANDA.
BUT HE'S A SYNTHEZOID -- I DON'T UNDERSTAND HIS WORKINGS -- CAN'T RE-CREATE HIS MISSING PARTS --
WANDA -- IN THE SKY, WANDA -- WHAT'S THAT -- THAT ENERGY--?
THAT ENERGY? IT'S... SIMON, VISION.
IT'S SIMON...

NEARBY...
I SHALL RETURN THE SWORD TO THE SEA OF ETERNAL NIGHT, CAPTAIN AMERICA -- BEFORE IT CAN BE USED FOR FURTHER DEVILTRY.
GOOD IDEA, THOR.
AND THEN -- I MUST NEEDS SEEK MY MISSING PEOPLE, AND SEE IF AUGHT CAN BE FOUND OF THEM.
BUT I SHALL RETURN. IT IS GOOD TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN -- TO KNOW THOR HATH SUCH VALIANT FRIENDS ON MIDGARD.
ALWAYS, THOR. NEVER DOUBT IT.
I'LL GO TRIGGER THE AUTOMATIC RETURN CIRCUITS IN THE OTHER QUINJETS, CAP.
THANKS, MONICA. LOOKS LIKE WE'LL NEED 'EM.
WE'VE GOT THE VISION AS STABLE AS WE CAN, CAP. SERSI'S SEALED OFF ALL HIS DAMAGED SYSTEMS, SO HE'S OUT OF IMMEDIATE DANGER.
CAN YOU FIX HIM?
WE CAN TRY. WE'LL KNOW MORE ONCE WE CAN GET HIM BACK TO THE MANSION.
SO IT LOOKS LIKE THAT'S IT, FELLAS AND GALS!
THE BIG BADDIE'S BEEN VANQUISHED, AND THE AVENGERS ARE BACK IN BUSINESS, BUMPS AND BRUISES ALL AROUND.
ALTHOUGH -- IF THAT WAS REALLY SIMON -- I'VE GOT SOME TALKIN' TO DO TO SOMEONE!
AND THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE QUESTION, IF YOU'LL FORGIVE ME FOR PARAPHRASING AN OLD PAL OF MINE...
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO WITH 39 AVENGERS?!
NEXT: THE CHOICE IS MADE!


MARVEL COMICS
?
MAY
#4
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BONUS POSTER INSIDE!
the AVENGERS
WHO WILL BE THE AVENGERS ?
BUSIEK • PÉREZ • VEY
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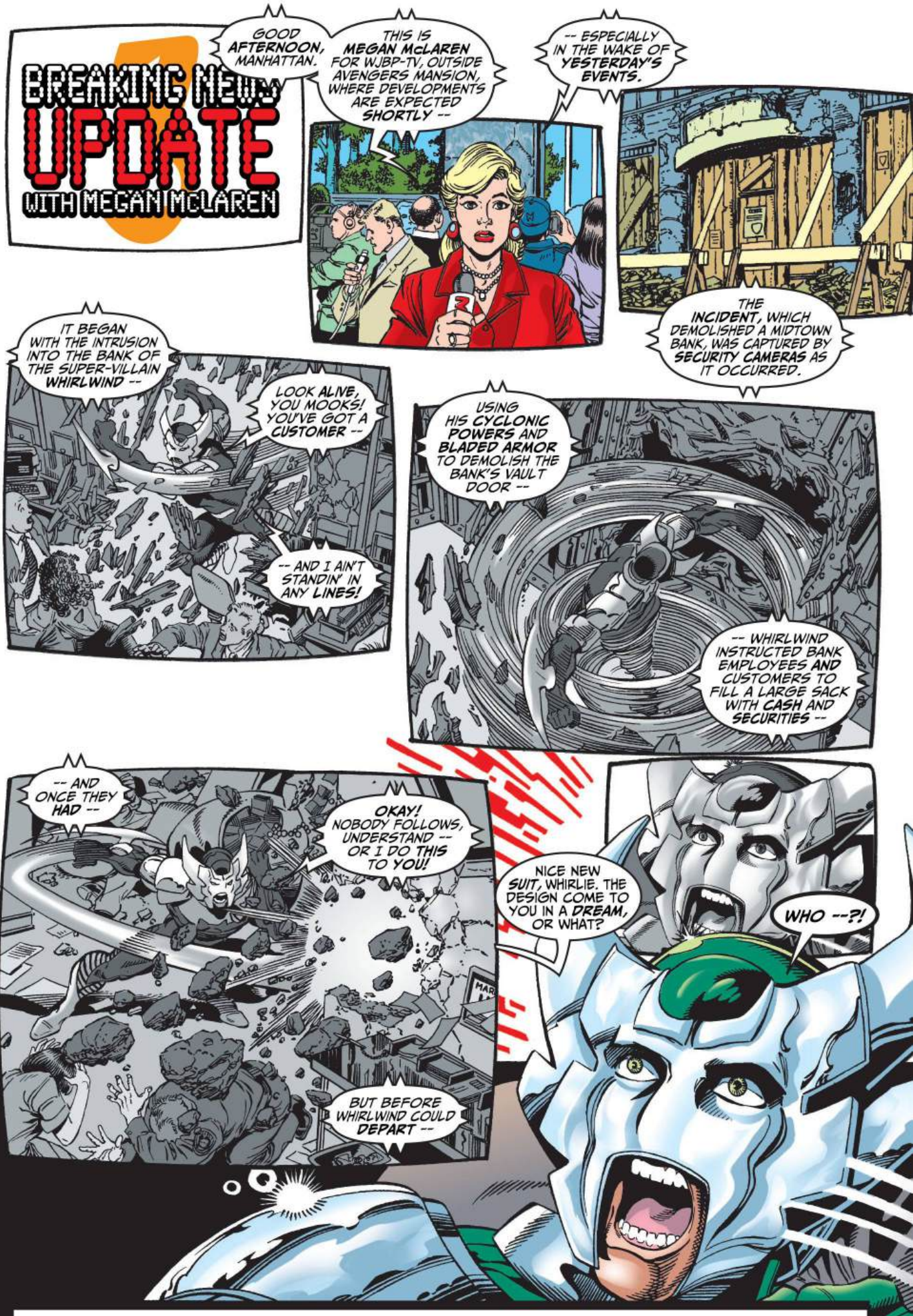

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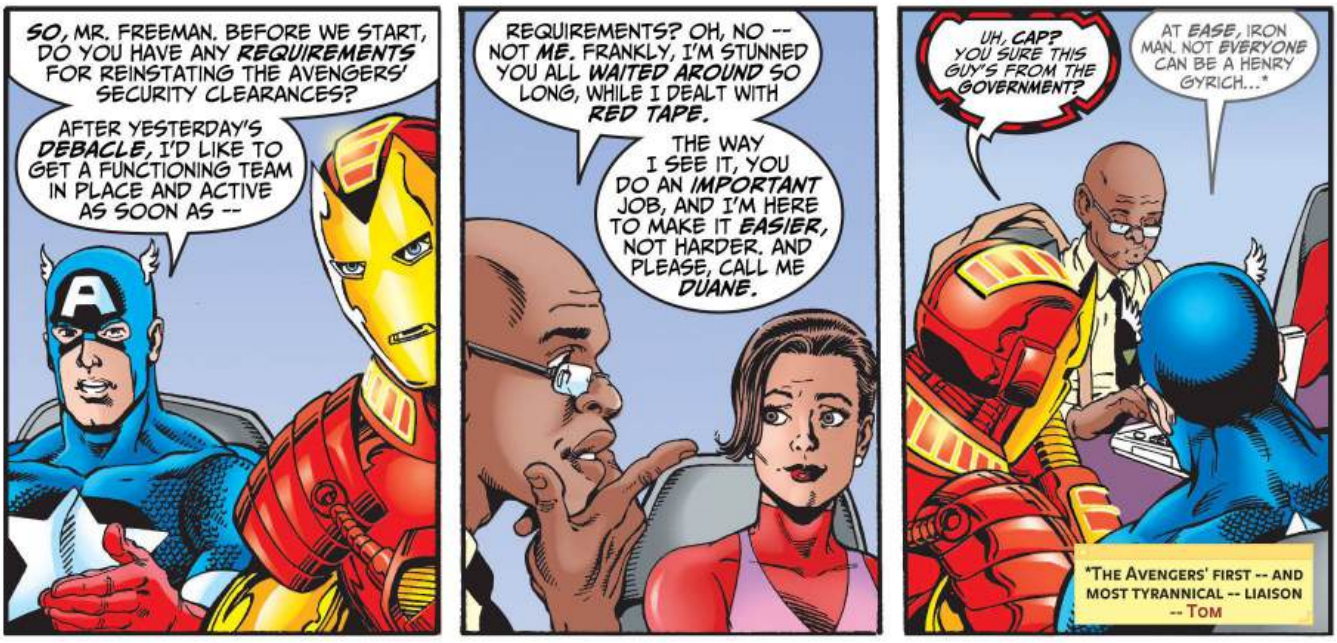
TOO MANY AVENGERS!

KURT BUSIEK by GEORGE PÉREZ | AL VEY & BOB WIACEK inkers TOM SMITH colors | RS/COMICRAFT/DB letters TOM BREVOORT edits | BOB HARRAS chief

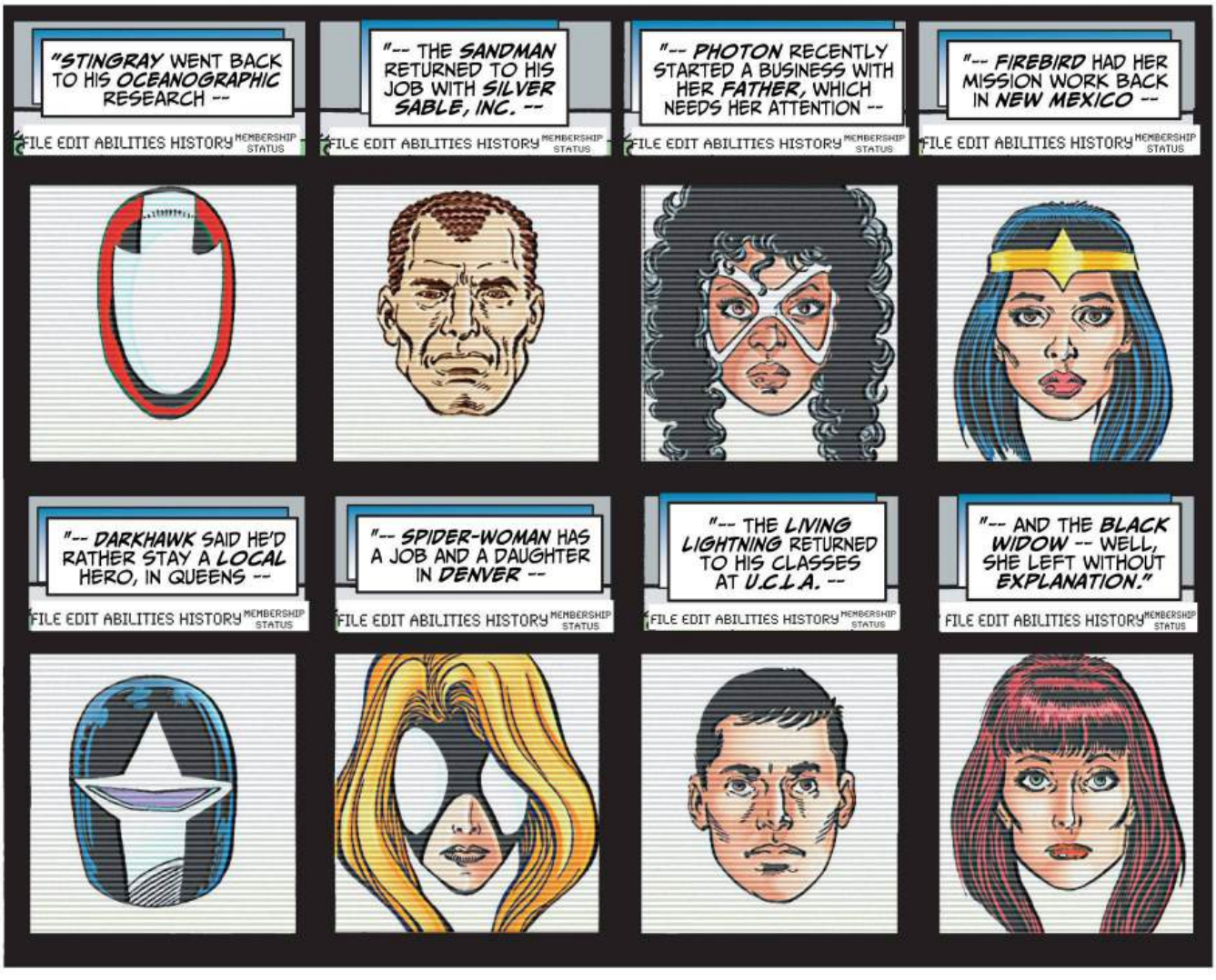
"HOWEVER, AS THE AVENGERS SURGED FORWARD --"
QUICKSILVER -- LOOK OUT! MY BLAST --!
OH, MAN! I'VE GOT TO -- I'VE GOT TO --
SURRENDER, DAVID CANNON, OR -- AGH!
PIETRO -- NO!
HEH -- SORRY ABOUT THE PSI-WEB, QUICKSILVER! MY FAULT --!
THOSE WERE JUST WARNING SHOTS, WHIRLIE! NOW SURRENDER, BEFORE --
WARNING SHOTS, HAWKEYE?!
WE CAN'T HIT HIM WITH AVENGERS IN THE WAY! GET THEM TO PULL BACK, BEFORE --
SANDMAN -- NFF!
OH, MAN -- THIS IS RICH! THERE'S SO MANY OF 'EM, THEY'RE STUMBLING OVER THEIR OWN FEET!
STILL, I BETTER HIGH-TAIL IT --
-- BEFORE THEY GET ORGANIZED!
FLEE AS FAR AS YOU LIKE, VILLAIN! YOU'LL NOT ESCAPE THE FURY OF HERCULES!
HERC -- NO! I'VE SET UP A WIND-TRAP, AND IF YOU DISRUPT IT --
"-- IT'LL GO WILD!"
WHOA!
UHH!
HEY!
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH! WHIRLWIND'S GETTING AWAY! SOMEONE -- ANYONE --
-- STOP HIM!

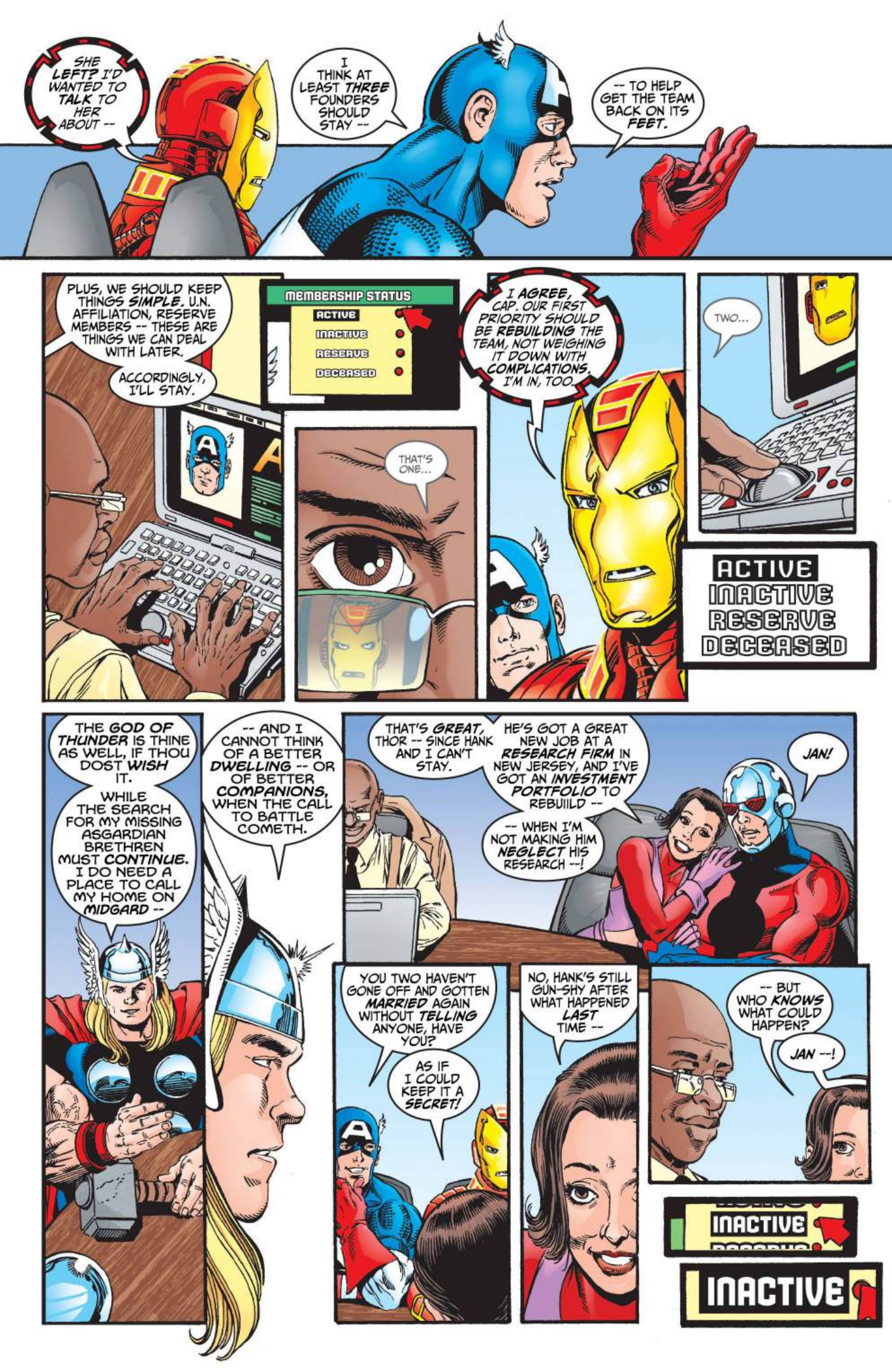
DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF, HAWKEYE. I'LL -- AIKH!
GHAH!
OH, I'M SO SORRY, MACHINE MAN! I DIDN'T MEAN TO -- YOU REACHED IN FRONT OF --
IT'S... QUITE ALL RIGHT, BINARY. I HAVE ANOTHER, AFTER ALL.
YOU -- HE --
THERE HE GOES --
WHERE? I CANNOT SEE --
OUR APOLOGIES, SIR. IF YOU CONTACT THE MARIA STARK FOUNDATION, I'M SURE ALL DAMAGES WILL BE PROMPTLY --
AND YOU THINK THAT MAKES EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT? WHAT IS THIS -- SUPER HERO AMATEUR HOUR?
PSI-WEBS, HAWKEYE! DID YOU SEE --
DO ME A FAVOR, QUICKSILVER, OKAY?
JUST... JUST SHUT UP FOR A SEC...
AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT FOR A PROUD TEAM -- AND ONE THAT HAD BEEN RIDING HIGH AFTER THEIR DEFEAT OF BARON ZEMO:
BUT AVENGERS SPOKESMEN HAVE PROMISED THAT THE TEAM WILL BE SWIFTLY CUT DOWN TO A MANAGEABLE NUMBER --
SUPER HERO EMBARRASSMENT
3
-- AND EVEN NOW, THE FOUNDING MEMBERS ARE IN CONFERENCE WITH THEIR NEW FEDERAL SECURITY LIAISON --
--AS A WORLD WAITS FOR NEWS OF THE NEW LINE-UP --!
"SORRY WE'RE LATE, FOLKS --"
890 FIFTH AVENUE
*See Thunderbolts#12, if you haven't already -- Tom

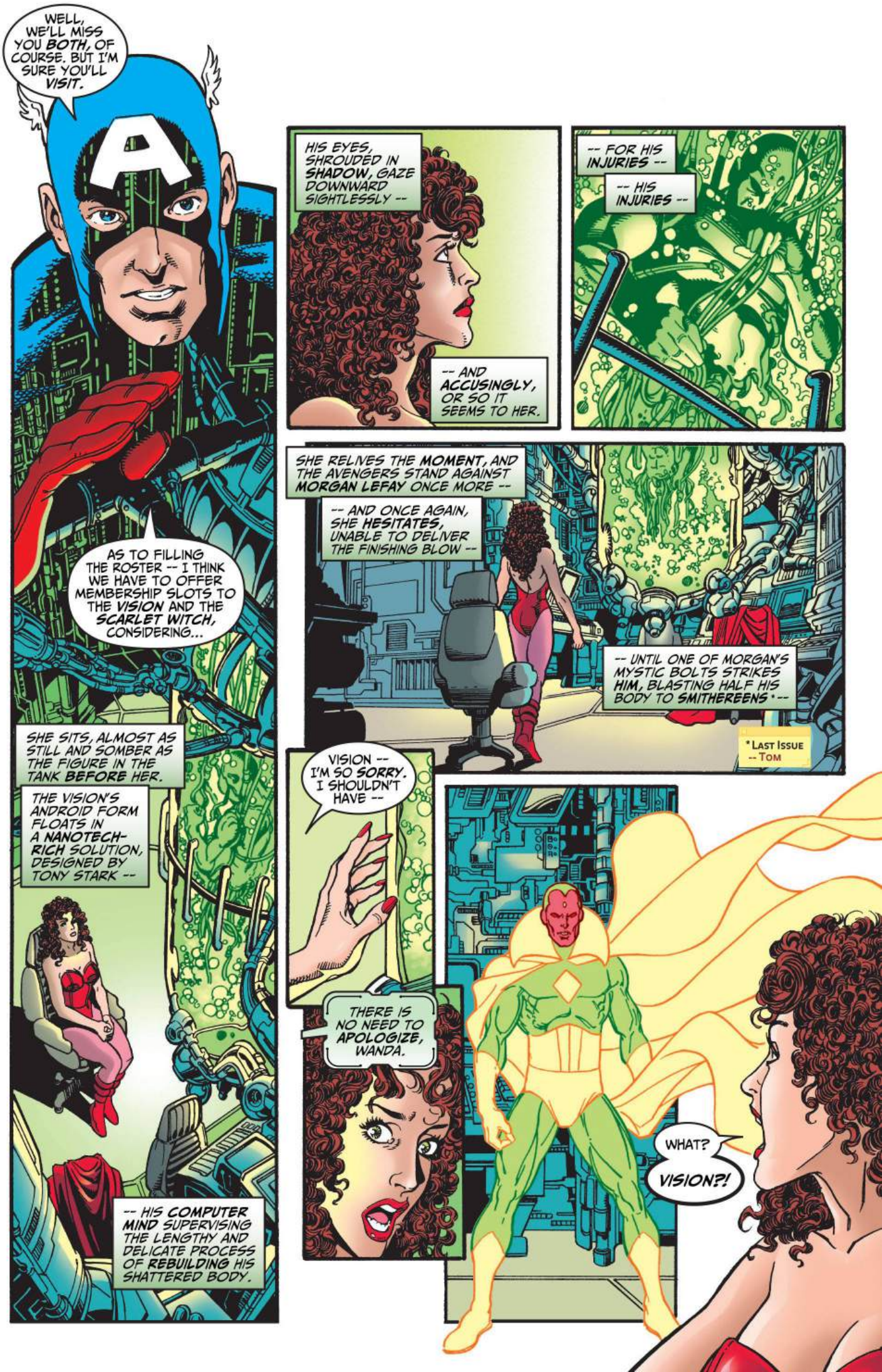
-- BUT SOMEBODY COULDN'T DECIDE WHICH COSTUME TO WEAR...
OH, LIKE IT'S EASY LOOKING THIS GOOD! HIYA, FELLAS! THE WINSOME WASP -- AND GRUMPY OL' GIANT-MAN -- REPORTING FOR DUTY!
LOVE THE SHIELD, CAP!
THANKS, JAN. IT'S NOT THE OLD ONE* -- BUT IT DOES THE JOB.
AHEM.
WASP, MAY I PRESENT FEDERAL AGENT DUANE JEROME FREEMAN, OUR NEW FEDERAL SECURITY LIAISON...
IN A SEC, IRON MAN! FIRST --
*LOST AT SEA, IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #2 -- TOM
-- I'VE JUST GOT TO TELL THOR HERE HOW GRRREAT HE LOOKS NOW THAT HE'S SHAVED! I SWEAR, THOR -- YOU'RE THE GOD OF HUNKS!
MY THANKS, JANET.
AND NOW, LET ME SHOOT UP TO FULL HEIGHT AND APOLOGIZE, MR. FREEMAN. I'M NOT USUALLY THIS GIDDY, NOT THESE DAYS --
BUT THIS GROUPING OF AVENGERS JUST DOES SOMETHING TO ME...
NO APOLOGY NECESSARY, MS. VAN DYNE. I KNOW THE FEELING.
BUT ON THAT SUBJECT -- YOU'RE ALL CONSIDERED "FOUNDERS," EVEN THOUGH CAPTAIN AMERICA DIDN'T JOIN UNTIL LATER.
IT'S EVEN IN YOUR CHARTER THAT WAY. HOW DOES THAT WORK?
IT'S AN ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER, MR. FREEMAN.
SOMEONE'S GOT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TEAM'S GOOD NAME, NO MATTER HOW OFTEN THE ROSTER CHANGES.
WE CHOSE TO MAKE THAT THE FOUNDERS -- AND FORMALLY GAVE CAP FOUNDER STATUS WHEN WE VOTED HULK OUT.
AH. OF COURSE.

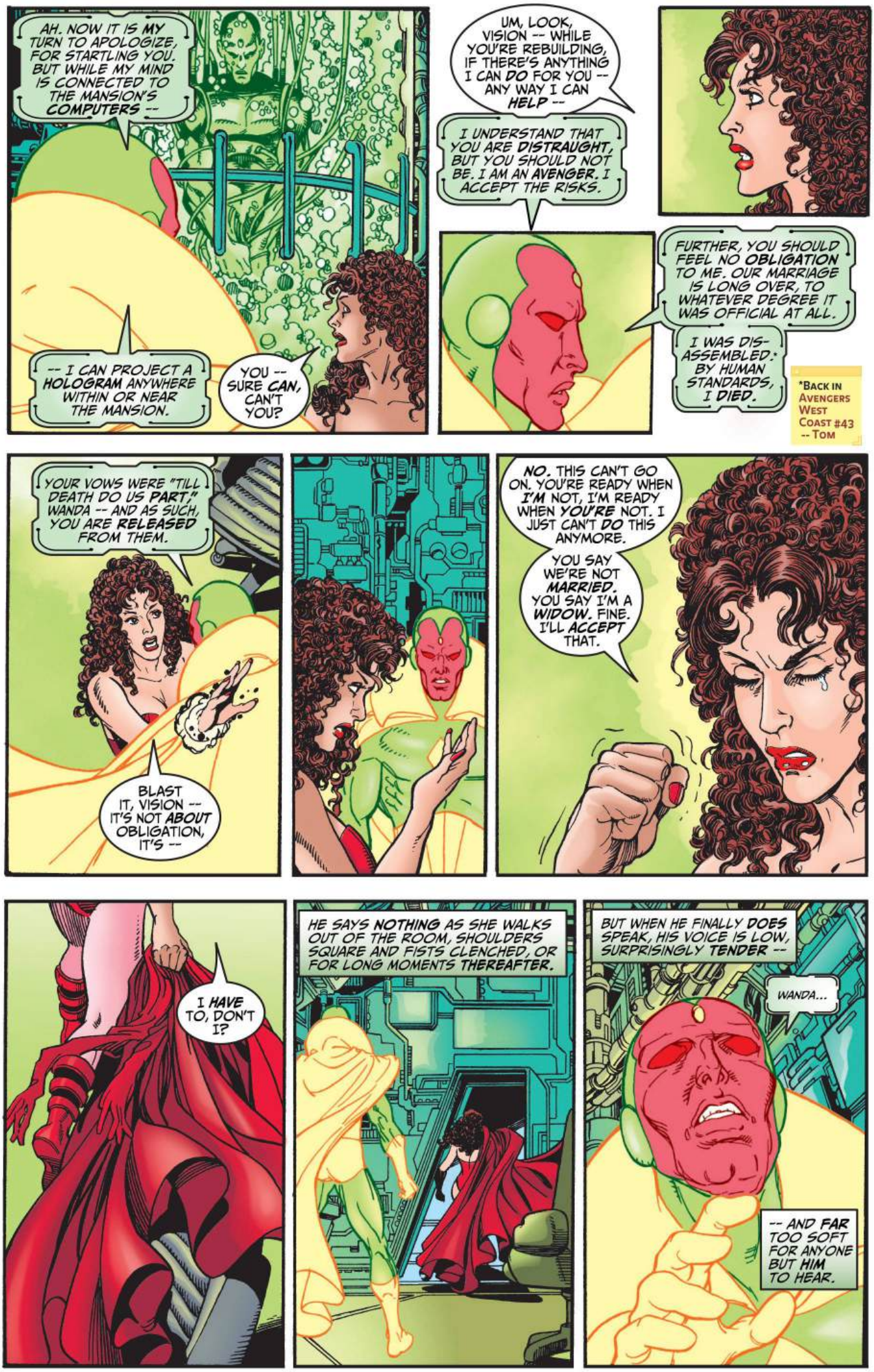

SO, MR. FREEMAN. BEFORE WE START, DO YOU HAVE ANY REQUIREMENTS FOR REINSTATING THE AVENGERS' SECURITY CLEARANCES?
AFTER YESTERDAY'S DEBACLE, I'D LIKE TO GET A FUNCTIONING TEAM IN PLACE AND ACTIVE AS SOON AS --
REQUIREMENTS? OH, NO -- NOT ME. FRANKLY, I'M STUNNED YOU ALL WAITED AROUND SO LONG, WHILE I DEALT WITH RED TAPE.
THE WAY I SEE IT, YOU DO AN IMPORTANT JOB, AND I'M HERE TO MAKE IT EASIER, NOT HARDER. AND PLEASE, CALL ME DUANE.
UH, CAP? YOU SURE THIS GUY'S FROM THE GOVERNMENT?
AT EASE, IRON MAN. NOT EVERYONE CAN BE A HENRY GYRICH...*
*THE AVENGERS' FIRST -- AND MOST TYRANNICAL -- LIAISON -- TOM

OKAY. WELL, THE FIRST STEP IS TO GET OUR NUMBERS DOWN TO A MANAGEABLE LEVEL. FORTUNATELY, THAT SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT.
WITH THE MORGAN LE FAY AFFAIR, WE GOT A LARGE TURNOUT, BUT THAT WAS DUE TO THE SITUATION MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
NOT EVERYONE WHO SHOWED UP INTENDED TO BECOME ACTIVE AGAIN. EIGHT OF THEM HAVE ALREADY LEFT, IN FACT...

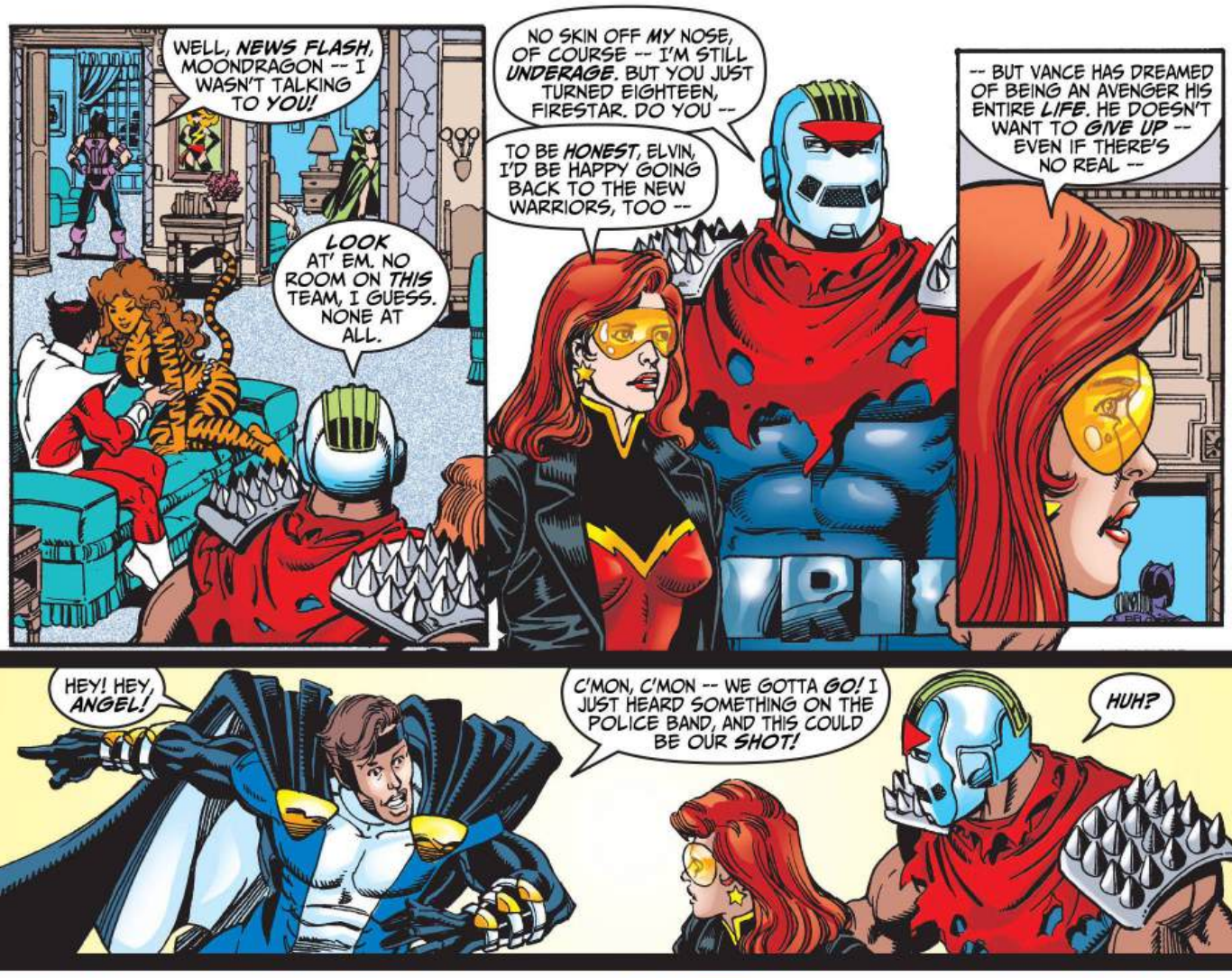

"STINGRAY WENT BACK TO HIS OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH --
"-- THE SANDMAN RETURNED TO HIS JOB WITH SILVER SABLE, INC. --
"-- PHOTON RECENTLY STARTED A BUSINESS WITH HER FATHER, WHICH NEEDS HER ATTENTION --
"-- FIREBIRD HAD HER MISSION WORK BACK IN NEW MEXICO --
FILE EDIT ABILITIES HISTORY MEMBERSHIP STATUS
"-- DARKHAWK SAID HE'D RATHER STAY A LOCAL HERO, IN QUEENS --
"-- SPIDER-WOMAN HAS A JOB AND A DAUGHTER IN DENVER --
"-- THE LIVING LIGHTNING RETURNED TO HIS CLASSES AT U.C.L.A. --
"-- AND THE BLACK WIDOW -- WELL, SHE LEFT WITHOUT EXPLANATION."


SHE LEFT? I'D WANTED TO TALK TO HER ABOUT --
I THINK AT LEAST THREE FOUNDERS SHOULD STAY --
-- TO HELP GET THE TEAM BACK ON ITS FEET.
PLUS, WE SHOULD KEEP THINGS SIMPLE. U.N. AFFILIATION, RESERVE MEMBERS -- THESE ARE THINGS WE CAN DEAL WITH LATER.
ACCORDINGLY, I'LL STAY.
MEMBERSHIP STATUS
ACTIVE
INACTIVE
RESERVE
DECEASED
THAT'S ONE...
I AGREE, CAP. OUR FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE REBUILDING THE TEAM, NOT WEIGHING IT DOWN WITH COMPLICATIONS. I'M IN, TOO.
TWO...
ACTIVE
INACTIVE
RESERVE
DECEASED
THE GOD OF THUNDER IS THINE AS WELL, IF THOU DOST WISH IT.
WHILE THE SEARCH FOR MY MISSING ASGARDIAN BRETHREN MUST CONTINUE. I DO NEED A PLACE TO CALL MY HOME ON MIDGARD --
-- AND I CANNOT THINK OF A BETTER DWELLING -- OR OF BETTER COMPANIONS, WHEN THE CALL TO BATTLE COMETH.
THAT'S GREAT, THOR -- SINCE HANK AND I CAN'T STAY.
HE'S GOT A GREAT NEW JOB AT A RESEARCH FIRM IN NEW JERSEY, AND I'VE GOT AN INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO TO REBUIILD --
-- WHEN I'M NOT MAKING HIM NEGLECT HIS RESEARCH --!
JAN!
YOU TWO HAVEN'T GONE OFF AND GOTTEN MARRIED AGAIN WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE, HAVE YOU?
AS IF I COULD KEEP IT A SECRET!
NO, HANK'S STILL GUN-SHY AFTER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME --
-- BUT WHO KNOWS WHAT COULD HAPPEN?
JAN --!
INACTIVE
INACTIVE


WELL, WE'LL MISS YOU BOTH, OF COURSE. BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL VISIT.
AS TO FILLING THE ROSTER -- I THINK WE HAVE TO OFFER MEMBERSHIP SLOTS TO THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH, CONSIDERING...
SHE SITS, ALMOST AS STILL AND SOMBER AS THE FIGURE IN THE TANK BEFORE HER.
THE VISION'S ANDROID FORM FLOATS IN A NANOTECH-RICH SOLUTION, DESIGNED BY TONY STARK --
-- HIS COMPUTER MIND SUPERVISING THE LENGTHY AND DELICATE PROCESS OF REBUILDING HIS SHATTERED BODY.
HIS EYES, SHROUDED IN SHADOW, GAZE DOWNWARD SIGHTLESSLY --
-- AND ACCUSINGLY, OR SO IT SEEMS TO HER.
-- FOR HIS INJURIES --
-- HIS INJURIES --
SHE RELIVES THE MOMENT, AND THE AVENGERS STAND AGAINST MORGAN LEFAY ONCE MORE --
-- AND ONCE AGAIN, SHE HESITATES, UNABLE TO DELIVER THE FINISHING BLOW --
-- UNTIL ONE OF MORGAN'S MYSTIC BOLTS STRIKES HIM, BLASTING HALF HIS BODY TO SMITHEREENS *--
* LAST ISSUE -- TOM
VISION -- I'M SO SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE --
THERE IS NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE, WANDA.
WHAT?
VISION?!


AH. NOW IT IS MY TURN TO APOLOGIZE, FOR STARTLING YOU. BUT WHILE MY MIND IS CONNECTED TO THE MANSION'S COMPUTERS --
-- I CAN PROJECT A HOLOGRAM ANYWHERE WITHIN OR NEAR THE MANSION.
YOU -- SURE CAN, CAN'T YOU?
UM, LOOK, VISION -- WHILE YOU'RE REBUILDING, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU -- ANY WAY I CAN HELP --
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE DISTRAUGHT, BUT YOU SHOULD NOT BE. I AM AN AVENGER. I ACCEPT THE RISKS.
FURTHER, YOU SHOULD FEEL NO OBLIGATION TO ME. OUR MARRIAGE IS LONG OVER, TO WHATEVER DEGREE IT WAS OFFICIAL AT ALL.
I WAS DIS-ASSEMBLED.* BY HUMAN STANDARDS, I DIED.
*BACK IN AVENGERS WEST COAST #43 -- TOM
YOUR VOWS WERE "TILL DEATH DO US PART," WANDA -- AND AS SUCH, YOU ARE RELEASED FROM THEM.
BLAST IT, VISION -- IT'S NOT ABOUT OBLIGATION, IT'S --
NO. THIS CAN'T GO ON. YOU'RE READY WHEN I'M NOT, I'M READY WHEN YOU'RE NOT. I JUST CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE.
YOU SAY WE'RE NOT MARRIED. YOU SAY I'M A WIDOW. FINE. I'LL ACCEPT THAT.
I HAVE TO, DON'T I?
HE SAYS NOTHING AS SHE WALKS OUT OF THE ROOM, SHOULDERS SQUARE AND FISTS CLENCHED, OR FOR LONG MOMENTS THEREAFTER.
BUT WHEN HE FINALLY DOES SPEAK, HIS VOICE IS LOW, SURPRISINGLY TENDER --
WANDA...
-- AND FAR TOO SOFT FOR ANYONE BUT HIM TO HEAR.

OUTSIDE...
LOOK! SOME OF THEM ARE COMING OUT!
SHE-HULK! BLACK KNIGHT! WILL YOU BE PART OF THE NEW TEAM?
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BUT NO. WE'RE NOT YOUR STORY.
THE KNIGHT AND I ARE BOTH WITH HEROES-FOR-HIRE -- HE'S A MEMBER, I'M AN ATTORNEY. AND CRYSTAL AND QUICKSILVER --
MY HUSBAND AND I ARE GOING TO VISIT MY RELATIVES IN ATTILAN, THE ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE INHUMANS.
AND HOW DOES IT FEEL TO LEAVE THE AVENGERS?
IT'S BEEN WONDEFUL TO BE WITH SO MANY OLD FRIENDS AGAIN --
-- BUT REALLY, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING WITH MY FAMILY.
AND DO YOU HAVE ANY GUESSES AS TO WHO'LL MAKE THE TEAM?
I COULDN'T BEGIN TO SAY, I'M AFRAID. BUT I WILL SAY THIS --
-- THE FOUNDING MEMBERS ARE TALKING TO THE OTHERS RIGHT NOW --
THE FOUNDING MEMBERS! HAH! WHO WAS CAP'S FIRST PICK BACK IN MORGAN'S WORLD, HUH?
ARE WE GOING TO LET THEM TREAT US LIKE THIS -- OR DO WE MARCH IN THERE AND DEMAND OUR SPOTS ON THE ROSTER?
RELAX, FRIEND HAWKEYE -- ERE YOU DO YOURSELF AN INJURY!
HERCULES, FOR ONE, IS CONTENT TO LEAVE THE CHOICE TO THE OTHERS!
AND I'VE NEVER WANTED TO BE A FULL-TIME AVENGER. BESIDES, WEREN'T YOU AGAINST ME JOINING IN THE FIRST PLACE?
WELL, YEAH, FALCON, BUT THAT WAS A LONG --
AS FOR ME, I AM MERELY WAITING AS A COURTESY. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF JOINING THIS OR ANY OTHER TEAM.
AND IT HARDLY TAKES TELEPATHY TO DIVINE THAT YOU ARE MERELY UPSET THAT YOU AREN'T ON THE SELECTION COMMITTEE YOURSELF.


WELL, NEWS FLASH, MOONDRAGON -- I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU!
LOOK AT' EM. NO ROOM ON THIS TEAM, I GUESS. NONE AT ALL.
NO SKIN OFF MY NOSE, OF COURSE -- I'M STILL UNDERAGE. BUT YOU JUST TURNED EIGHTEEN, FIRESTAR. DO YOU --
TO BE HONEST, ELVIN, I'D BE HAPPY GOING BACK TO THE NEW WARRIORS, TOO --
-- BUT VANCE HAS DREAMED OF BEING AN AVENGER HIS ENTIRE LIFE. HE DOESN'T WANT TO GIVE UP -- EVEN IF THERE'S NO REAL --

HEY! HEY, ANGEL!
C'MON, C'MON -- WE GOTTA GO! I JUST HEARD SOMETHING ON THE POLICE BAND, AND THIS COULD BE OUR SHOT!
HUH?

YOU WANT ME TO COME ALONG, JUSTICE?
NO OFFENSE MEANT, RAGE, BUT THIS ISN'T A WARRIORS GIG -- IT'S AVENGERS BUSINESS!
AND WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
LOOKS LIKE THE JUNIOR LEAGUE'S GOT SOMETHIN' COOKIN'. THEY'RE GOOD KIDS -- IT'S TOO BAD THEY CAN'T --
-- HEY NOW. HEY, THERE'S AN IDEA...
"ATHENA? PALLAS? NIKE?"

"OH, COME ON. DO I LOOK GREEK TO YOU?"
NOT AT THE MOMENT, NO.
CORONA? FLARE? BLAZE?
TAKEN, I DON'T THINK SO --
-- AND I DON'T THINK SO.
SO WHAT'S THE SCORE? GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT.

STRAIGHT YOU WANT, MY DEAR MS. DANVERS -- STRAIGHT YOU GET. IT APPEARS THAT YOUR POWERS HAVE DEFINITELY DECREASED.
FROM THESE READINGS, I DOUBT YOU'LL EVEN BE ABLE TO SHIFT INTO YOUR BINARY FORM AGAIN. I'M SORRY.
DON'T BE. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. BESIDES, YOU'RE ONLY CONFIRMING WHAT I ALREADY KNEW. I'VE BEEN FEELING IT FOR WEEKS.

JUST DO ME A FAVOR, BEAST, AND DON'T TELL ANYONE. HEY, WOULD A FIGHTER-PLANE WORK? ONE OF THE OLD WARBIRDS, MAYBE?

FOR AN EX-U.S.A.F. CUTIE WHO FLIES? HOW OUTRÉ CAN YOU GET?
BUT HEY, SO YOU GO FROM PHENOMENALLY POWERFUL TO MERELY INCREDIBLY POWERFUL. WHERE'S THE HARM IN TELLING --

NO, BEAST. YOU'VE GOT THE X-MEN, I WANT ON THIS TEAM -- AND I'M NOT GOING TO RISK JEOPARDIZING IT. NOW WHAT'VE YOU GOT?
UH, BEFORE YOU LOOK --

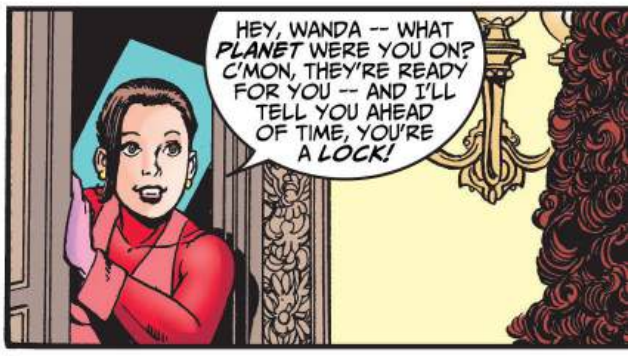
WARRIOR WOMAN? REGALIA? STUKA? BLITZKRIEG?
HEY, I'M CALLED THE BEAST! WHAT DO I KNOW FROM NAMES?
REGALIA NIMBUS
DYNAMO MARVELLE
BLITZKRIEG WARRIOR WOMAN GALACTICA
SHRIKE PITFIRE
HURRICANE
STUKA ZERO

AND AS TWO OLD FRIENDS SHARE A MOMENT OF LAUGHTER -- SEVERAL FLOORS ABOVE, WANDA MAXIMOFF STARES MOODILY INTO SPACE.
HER FEELINGS CHURN INSIDE HER, AND SHE FEELS TERRIBLY ALONE.

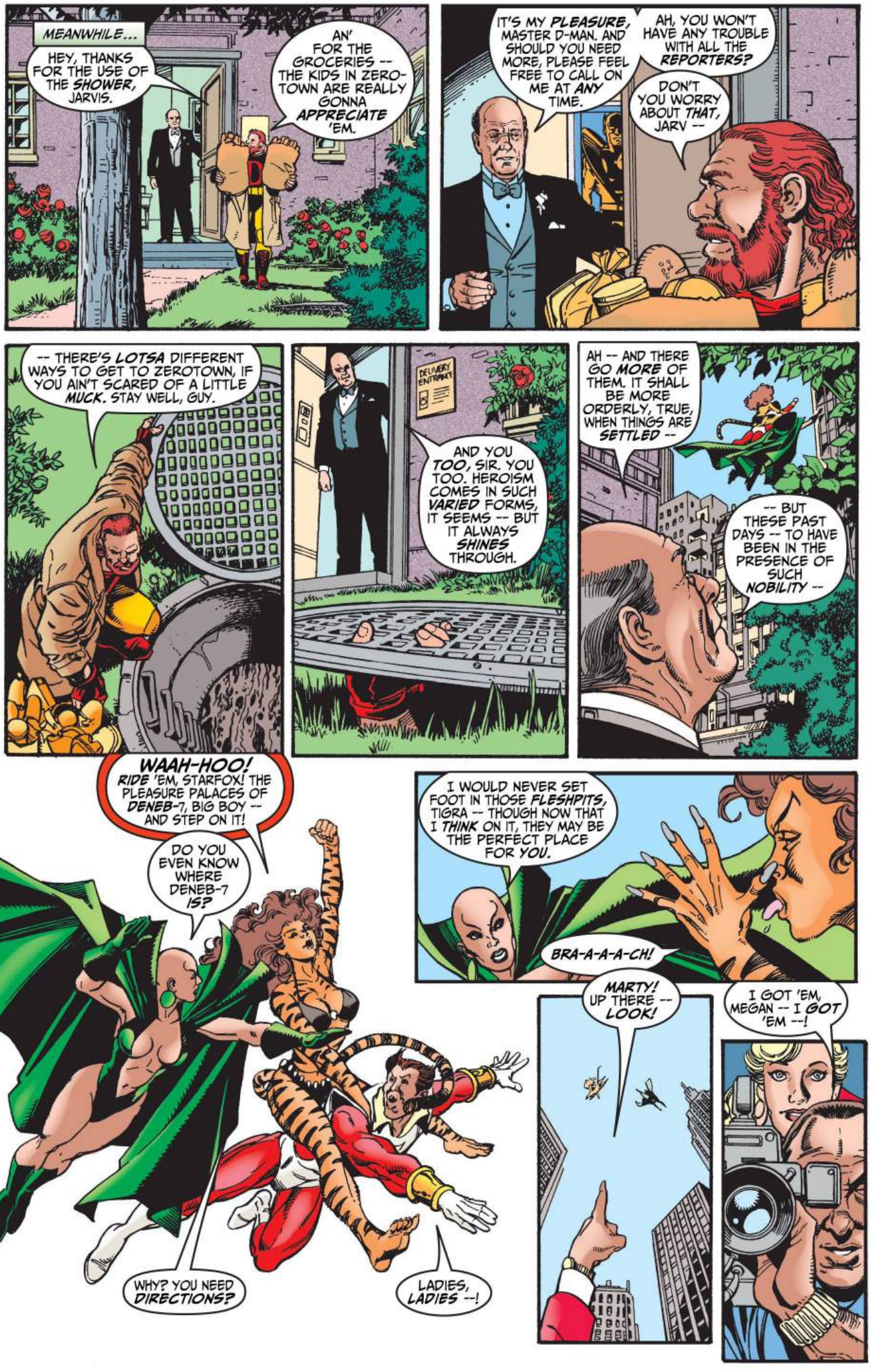
BUT AGAIN AND AGAIN, SHE FINDS HER THOUGHTS RETURNING TO THE SAME POINT -- THE SAME FACE --

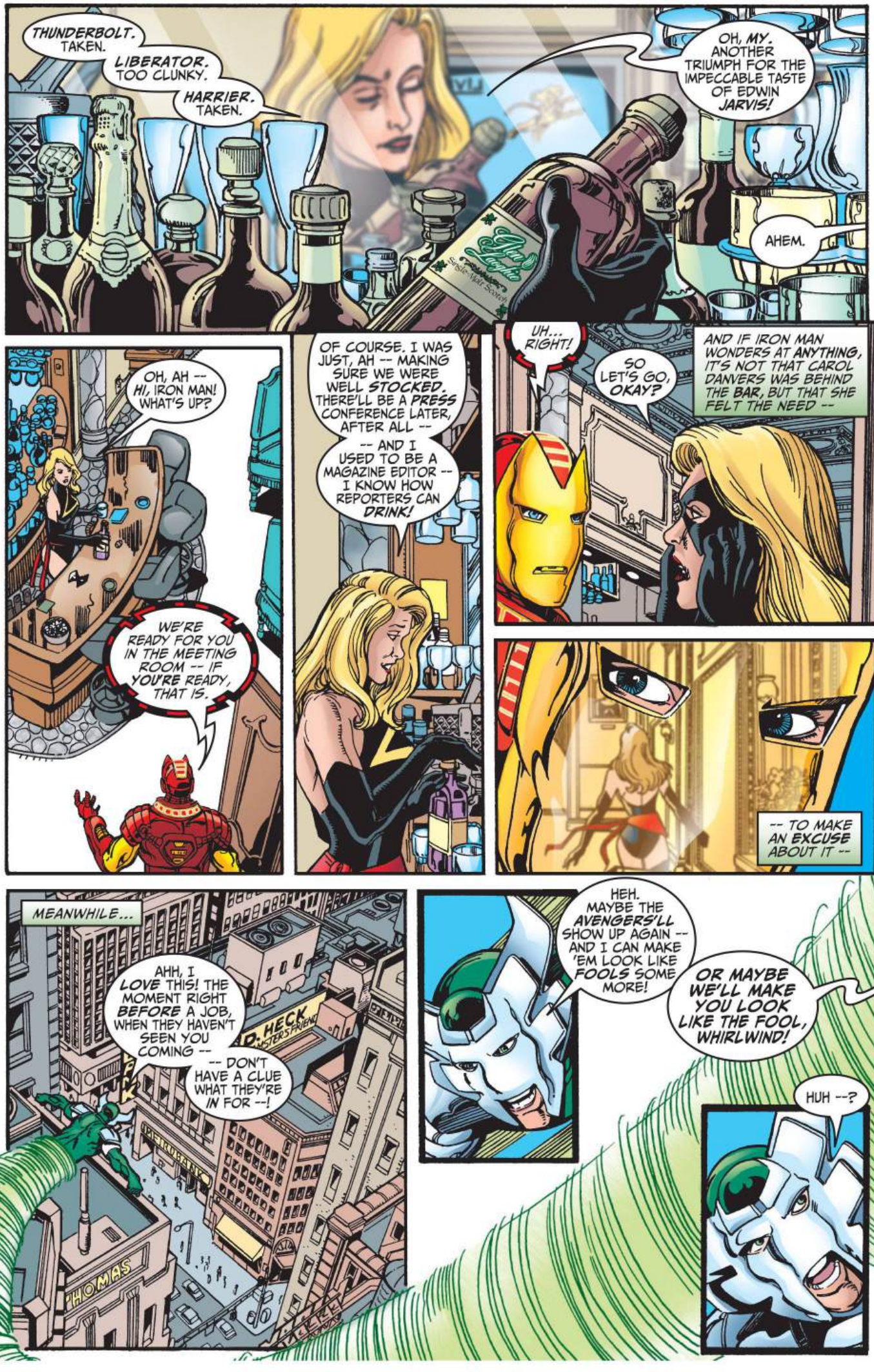
-- THE FACE OF A DEAD MAN --

WANDA!

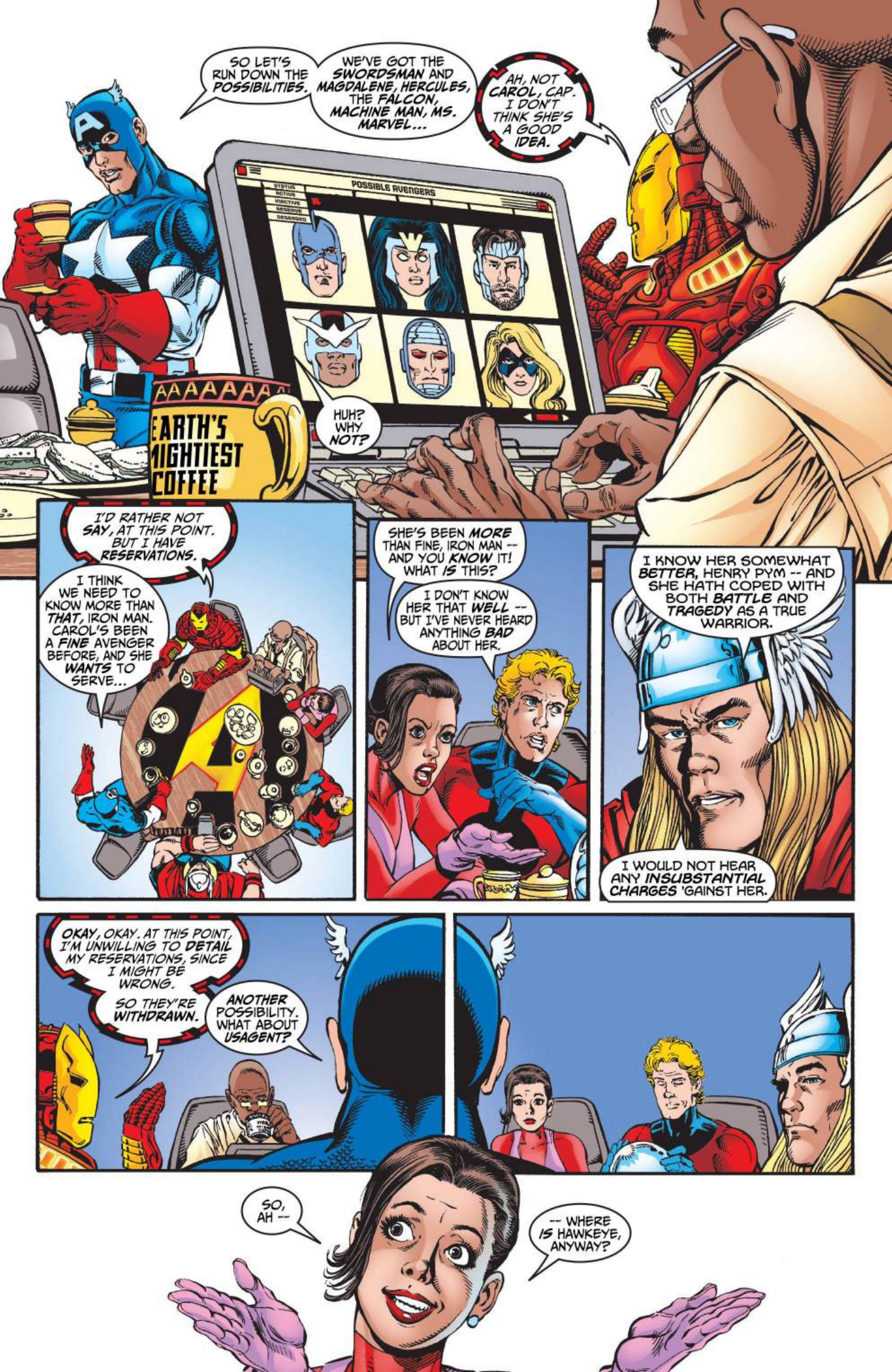

HEY, WANDA -- WHAT PLANET WERE YOU ON? C'MON, THEY'RE READY FOR YOU -- AND I'LL TELL YOU AHEAD OF TIME, YOU'RE A LOCK!

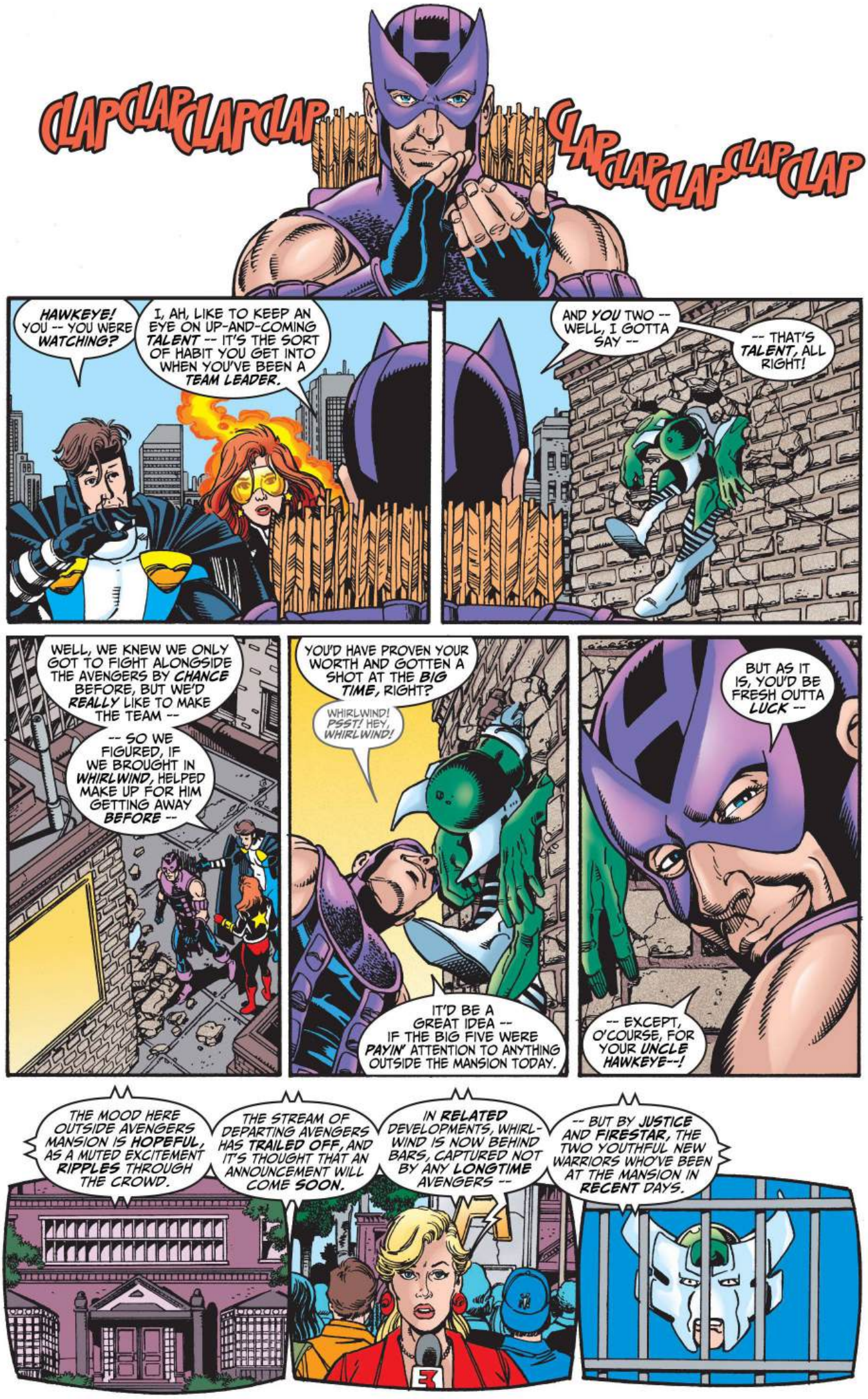
YES, I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M BETTER OFF *HERE*, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT...
WELL, MY DUTIES AS *PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE* KEEP ME IN *SPACE* A LOT, BUT IF YOU NEED ME TO FIT SOME AVENGERING IN...
I'LL BE STAYING IN OLYMPIA -- AT LEAST UNTIL I GET *BORED*. BUT IF YOU'RE THROWING A PARTY -- OR JUST *KNOW* ABOUT ONE...
YOU'VE BEEN VERY GENEROUS TO THE *SWORDSMAN* AND ME, BUT THIS REALLY *ISN'T* OUR WORLD --
-- AND WE FEEL SORT OF... OUT OF *PLACE*. BUT WE HAVEN'T MADE ANY DECISIONS, NOT YET...
I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN. I HAVE FAR TOO MUCH TO ATTEND TO THESE DAYS TO EVEN THINK ABOUT SERVING AS AN AVENGER.
MY INTEREST IS MORE IN *HUMANS* AND HUMAN *INTERACTION* THAN IN ADVENTURE. BUT IF YOU *NEED* ME --
MY DUTIES CALL ME BACK TO *WAKANDA* -- AND I MUST ADMIT, I GO WITH A GLAD HEART. BUT I AM SURE OUR PATHS WILL *CROSS*...
WHEW! I KNEW A LOT OF THEM HAD OTHER PLANS, BUT NOW I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF WE'LL FILL OUT THE TEAM AT *ALL!*
MAYBE JAN AND I SHOULD *RETHINK* OUR DECISION TO GO...
I WOULDN'T *WORRY* ABOUT IT. WE'VE GOT FIVE MEMBERS SET AND *PLENTY* OF VOLUNTEERS. AND *HAWKEYE* HASN'T BEEN IN YET --
--THOUGH WE CALLED HIM A *WHILE* AGO, COME TO THINK OF IT.
UM -- A POINT OF *ORDER*, IF I COULD. WOULD IT BE OUT OF LINE --
-- IF I ASKED SOME OF THE DEPARTING AVENGERS FOR *AUTOGRAPHS*, BEFORE THEY GO?
ARE YOU *SURE* YOU'RE FROM THE GOVERNMENT --?
AUTOGRAPHS


MEANWHILE...
HEY, THANKS FOR THE USE OF THE SHOWER, JARVIS.
AN' FOR THE GROCERIES -- THE KIDS IN ZERO-TOWN ARE REALLY GONNA APPRECIATE 'EM.
IT'S MY PLEASURE, MASTER D-MAN. AND SHOULD YOU NEED MORE, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL ON ME AT ANY TIME.
AH, YOU WON'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE WITH ALL THE REPORTERS?
DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT, JARV --
-- THERE'S LOTSA DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET TO ZEROTOWN, IF YOU AIN'T SCARED OF A LITTLE MUCK. STAY WELL, GUY.
DELIVERY ENTRANCE
AND YOU TOO, SIR. YOU TOO. HEROISM COMES IN SUCH VARIED FORMS, IT SEEMS -- BUT IT ALWAYS SHINES THROUGH.
AH -- AND THERE GO MORE OF THEM. IT SHALL BE MORE ORDERLY, TRUE, WHEN THINGS ARE SETTLED --
-- BUT THESE PAST DAYS -- TO HAVE BEEN IN THE PRESENCE OF SUCH NOBILITY --
WAAH-HOO! RIDE 'EM, STARFOX! THE PLEASURE PALACES OF DENEB-7, BIG BOY -- AND STEP ON IT!
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE DENEB-7 IS?
WHY? YOU NEED DIRECTIONS?
LADIES, LADIES --!
I WOULD NEVER SET FOOT IN THOSE FLESHPITS, TIGRA -- THOUGH NOW THAT I THINK ON IT, THEY MAY BE THE PERFECT PLACE FOR YOU.
BRA-A-A-A-CH!
MARTY! UP THERE -- LOOK!
I GOT 'EM, MEGAN -- I GOT 'EM --!

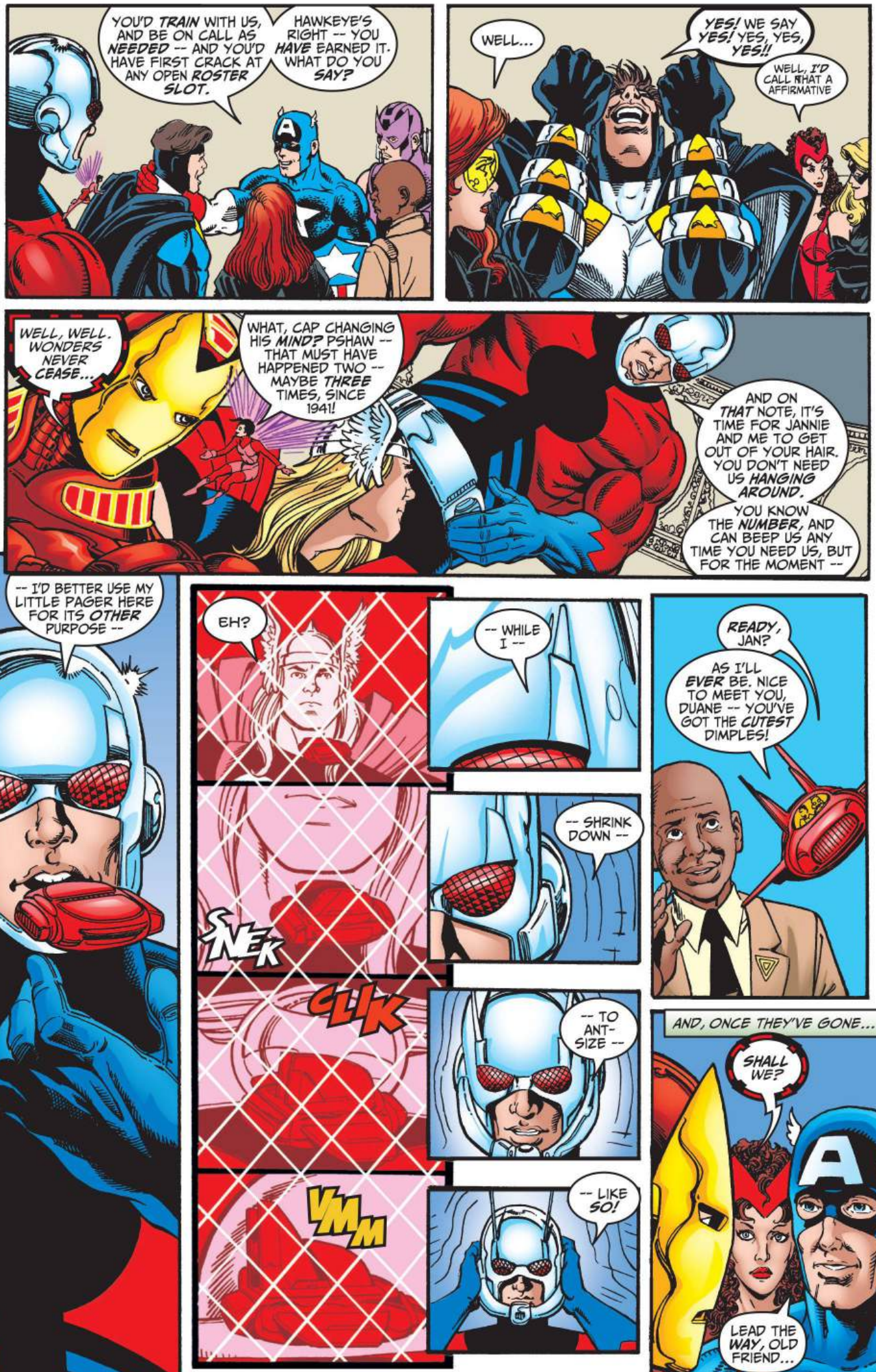

THUNDERBOLT. TAKEN.
LIBERATOR. TOO CLUNKY.
HARRIER. TAKEN.
OH, MY. ANOTHER TRIUMPH FOR THE IMPECCABLE TASTE OF EDWIN JARVIS!
AHEM.
OH, AH -- HI, IRON MAN! WHAT'S UP?
WE'RE READY FOR YOU IN THE MEETING ROOM -- IF YOU'RE READY, THAT IS.
OF COURSE. I WAS JUST, AH -- MAKING SURE WE WERE WELL STOCKED. THERE'LL BE A PRESS CONFERENCE LATER, AFTER ALL --
-- AND I USED TO BE A MAGAZINE EDITOR -- I KNOW HOW REPORTERS CAN DRINK!
UH... RIGHT!
SO LET'S GO, OKAY?
AND IF IRON MAN WONDERS AT ANYTHING, IT'S NOT THAT CAROL DANVERS WAS BEHIND THE BAR, BUT THAT SHE FELT THE NEED --
-- TO MAKE AN EXCUSE ABOUT IT --
MEANWHILE...
AHH, I LOVE THIS! THE MOMENT RIGHT BEFORE A JOB, WHEN THEY HAVEN'T SEEN YOU COMING --
-- DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT THEY'RE IN FOR --!
HEH. MAYBE THE AVENGERS'LL SHOW UP AGAIN -- AND I CAN MAKE 'EM LOOK LIKE FOOLS SOME MORE!
OR MAYBE WE'LL MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE THE FOOL, WHIRLWIND!
HUH --?

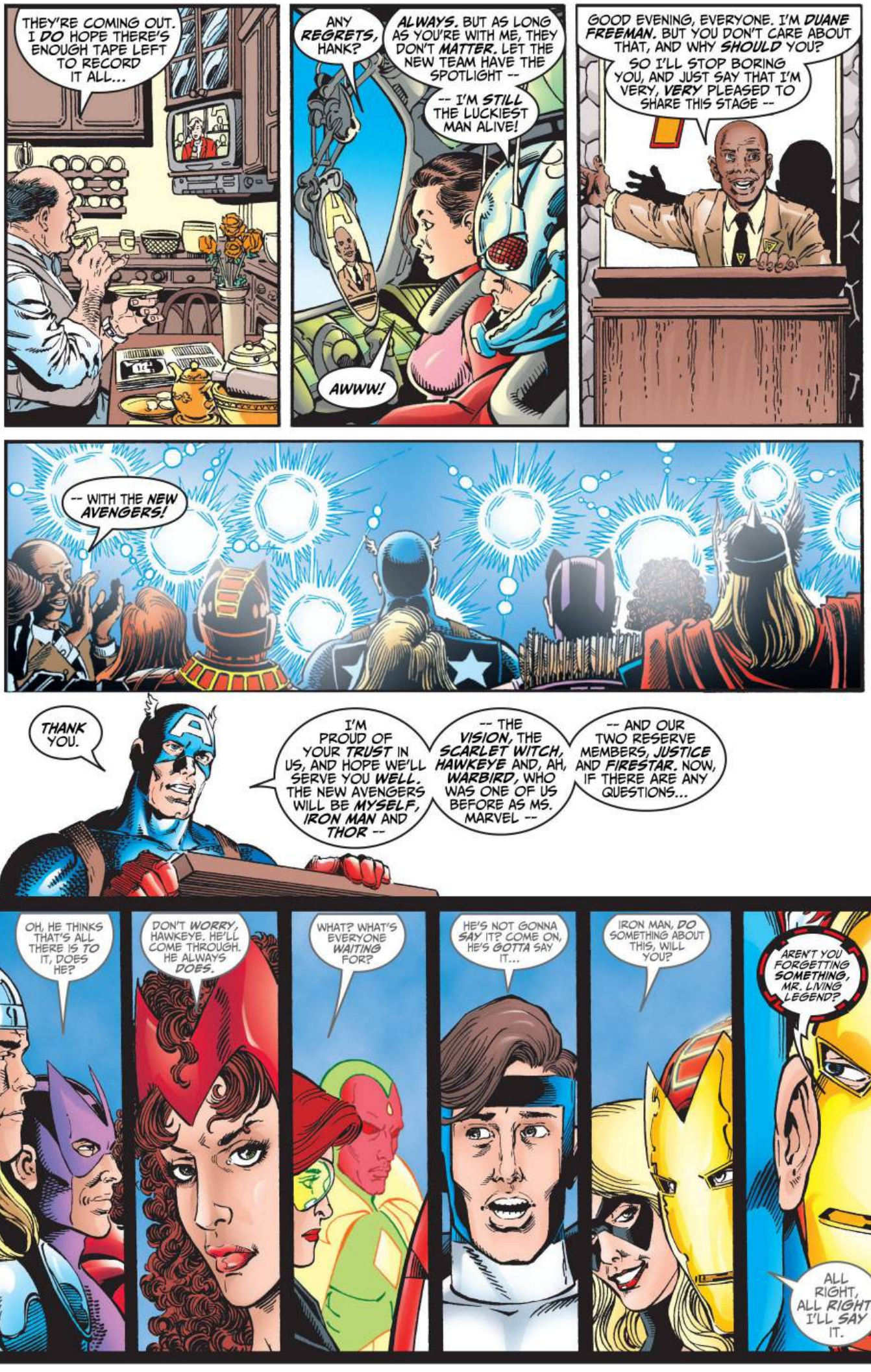
PTOOM
YOU ONLY ESCAPED THE AVENGERS BEFORE BECAUSE THERE WERE TOO MANY OF THEM -- BECAUSE THEY GOT IN EACH OTHER'S WAY!
BUT THIS TIME -- THE AVENGERS ARE GOING TO TAKE YOU DOWN!
OH, YEAH? WELL. I DON'T SEE ANY AVENGERS HERE, KID --
-- JUST A COUPLE OF WET-BEHIND-THE-EARS PUNKS TRYIN' TO PLAY WITH THE BIG BOYS!
I'VE HELD MY OWN AGAINST GIANT-MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA, KID. AN' YOU THINK YOU TWO CAN TAKE ME?
GO AHEAD, JUSTICE. YOU'RE ITCHING TO TELL HIM WHAT YOU TOLD ME...
I'VE STUDIED YOU, WHIRLWIND! I'VE STUDIED ALL THE AVENGERS' FOES!
YOU'RE BEST AGAINST HEROES WITH PHYSICAL ABILITIES -- HEROES YOUR MOBILITY LETS YOU RUN RINGS AROUND!
BUT AGAINST MY TELEKINESIS -- AND FIRESTAR'S MICROWAVE BURSTS -- YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE!
OH, YEAH? WELL, WHIRLWIND DON'T FALL QUITE THAT EASY! BRING IT ON, KIDS --
-- LET'S SEE WHAT YOU GOT!


SO LET'S RUN DOWN THE POSSIBILITIES.
WE'VE GOT THE SWORDSMAN AND MAGDALENE, HERCULES, THE FALCON, MACHINE MAN, MS. MARVEL...
AH, NOT CAROL, CAP. I DON'T THINK SHE'S A GOOD IDEA.
POSSIBLE AVENGERS
STATUS
ACTIVE
INACTIVE
RESERVE
DESIGNED
AAAAAAA
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST COFFEE
HUH? WHY NOT?
I'D RATHER NOT SAY, AT THIS POINT. BUT I HAVE RESERVATIONS.
I THINK WE NEED TO KNOW MORE THAN THAT, IRON MAN. CAROL'S BEEN A FINE AVENGER BEFORE, AND SHE WANTS TO SERVE...
SHE'S BEEN MORE THAN FINE, IRON MAN -- AND YOU KNOW IT! WHAT IS THIS?
I DON'T KNOW HER THAT WELL -- BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING BAD ABOUT HER.
I KNOW HER SOMEWHAT BETTER, HENRY PYM -- AND SHE HATH COPED WITH BOTH BATTLE AND TRAGEDY AS A TRUE WARRIOR.
I WOULD NOT HEAR ANY INSUBSTANTIAL CHARGES 'GAINST HER.
OKAY, OKAY. AT THIS POINT, I'M UNWILLING TO DETAIL MY RESERVATIONS, SINCE I MIGHT BE WRONG.
SO THEY'RE WITHDRAWN.
ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. WHAT ABOUT USAGENT?
SO, AH --
-- WHERE IS HAWKEYE, ANYWAY?


CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
HAWKEYE! YOU -- YOU WERE WATCHING?
I, AH, LIKE TO KEEP AN EYE ON UP-AND-COMING TALENT -- IT'S THE SORT OF HABIT YOU GET INTO WHEN YOU'VE BEEN A TEAM LEADER.
AND YOU TWO -- WELL, I GOTTA SAY --
-- THAT'S TALENT, ALL RIGHT!
WELL, WE KNEW WE ONLY GOT TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE AVENGERS BY CHANCE BEFORE, BUT WE'D REALLY LIKE TO MAKE THE TEAM --
-- SO WE FIGURED, IF WE BROUGHT IN WHIRLWIND, HELPED MAKE UP FOR HIM GETTING AWAY BEFORE --
YOU'D HAVE PROVEN YOUR WORTH AND GOTTEN A SHOT AT THE BIG TIME, RIGHT?
WHIRLWIND! PSST! HEY, WHIRLWIND!
IT'D BE A GREAT IDEA -- IF THE BIG FIVE WERE PAYIN' ATTENTION TO ANYTHING OUTSIDE THE MANSION TODAY.
BUT AS IT IS, YOU'D BE FRESH OUTTA LUCK --
-- EXCEPT, O'COURSE, FOR YOUR UNCLE HAWKEYE--!
THE MOOD HERE OUTSIDE AVENGERS MANSION IS HOPEFUL, AS A MUTED EXCITEMENT RIPPLES THROUGH THE CROWD.
THE STREAM OF DEPARTING AVENGERS HAS TRAILED OFF, AND IT'S THOUGHT THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT WILL COME SOON.
IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, WHIRLWIND IS NOW BEHIND BARS, CAPTURED NOT BY ANY LONGTIME AVENGERS --
-- BUT BY JUSTICE AND FIRESTAR, THE TWO YOUTHFUL NEW WARRIORS WHO'VE BEEN AT THE MANSION IN RECENT DAYS.

HAWKEYE, CONDUCTING THEM BACK INSIDE, TOLD REPORTERS TO "WATCH FOR BIG NEWS ABOUT THESE TWO SOON."
EARLIER TODAY
OH, HAWKEYE, YOU DIDN'T --!
YOU BET I DID. MEET THE TWO NEWEST ASSEMBLERS, GANG. THEY'VE EARNED IT -- AND I'M GIVIN' IT TO 'EM.
HAWKEYE -- IF YOU'D COME TO US WITH THIS --
WHAT, IN YOUR FOUNDERS-ONLY CLUB? C'MON, CAP, YOU TOLD ME YOURSELF YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO ME MORE OFTEN.
WELL, I'LL MAKE IT LOUD AN' CLEAR: THEY'RE IN -- OR I'M OUT.
I KNOW YOU WANT A VOICE IN THINGS, HAWKEYE -- BUT THIS ISN'T THE WAY. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT FIFTEEN MINUTES AGO --
-- BUT WE JUST CLOSED THE ROSTER. THE ONLY SPACE STILL OPEN -- IS THE ONE WE WERE HOLDING FOR YOU.
WHAT?! MY SPOT --?
UH, WELL -- YOU KNOW ME. I...DON'T SAY IT IF I DON'T MEAN IT.
THERE'S ONE SPOT, AN' TWO A' THEM. THEY'RE KIDS, THEY CAN SHARE IT, OKAY? YOU OWE ME THAT AT L--
NO! THANKS FOR THE HELP, HAWKEYE, BUT IT'S NOT NECESSARY.
HONEY, WHAT --
IT'S OBVIOUS WE'RE NOT WANTED HERE, VANCE -- AND MAYBE YOU'RE WILLING TO BEG FOR SCRAPS, BUT I'M NOT. LET'S GO.
WAIT, MISS--!
I MADE A DECISION EARLIER, BUT I'VE RETHOUGHT IT. YOU TWO DID THE JOB WHILE WE WERE PUSHING PAPER, AND THAT MEANS A LOT.
THE ROSTER IS CLOSED -- BUT WE COULD USE A COUPLE OF RESERVE MEMBERS.


YOU'D TRAIN WITH US, AND BE ON CALL AS NEEDED -- AND YOU'D HAVE FIRST CRACK AT ANY OPEN ROSTER SLOT.
HAWKEYE'S RIGHT -- YOU HAVE EARNED IT. WHAT DO YOU SAY?
WELL...
YES! WE SAY YES! YES, YES, YES!!
WELL, I'D CALL THAT A AFFIRMATIVE
WELL, WELL. WONDERS NEVER CEASE...
WHAT, CAP CHANGING HIS MIND? PSHAW -- THAT MUST HAVE HAPPENED TWO -- MAYBE THREE TIMES, SINCE 1941!
AND ON THAT NOTE, IT'S TIME FOR JANNIE AND ME TO GET OUT OF YOUR HAIR. YOU DON'T NEED US HANGING AROUND.
YOU KNOW THE NUMBER, AND CAN BEEP US ANY TIME YOU NEED US, BUT FOR THE MOMENT --
-- I'D BETTER USE MY LITTLE PAGER HERE FOR ITS OTHER PURPOSE --
EH?
-- WHILE I --
-- SHRINK DOWN --
SNEK
CLIK
VMM
-- TO ANT-SIZE --
-- LIKE SO!
READY, JAN?
AS I'LL EVER BE. NICE TO MEET YOU, DUANE -- YOU'VE GOT THE CUTEST DIMPLES!
AND, ONCE THEY'VE GONE...
SHALL WE?
LEAD THE WAY, OLD FRIEND...


THEY'RE COMING OUT. I DO HOPE THERE'S ENOUGH TAPE LEFT TO RECORD IT ALL...
ANY REGRETS, HANK?
ALWAYS. BUT AS LONG AS YOU'RE WITH ME, THEY DON'T MATTER. LET THE NEW TEAM HAVE THE SPOTLIGHT --
-- I'M STILL THE LUCKIEST MAN ALIVE!
AWWW!
GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE. I'M DUANE FREEMAN. BUT YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT, AND WHY SHOULD YOU?
SO I'LL STOP BORING YOU, AND JUST SAY THAT I'M VERY, VERY PLEASED TO SHARE THIS STAGE --
-- WITH THE NEW AVENGERS!
THANK YOU.
I'M PROUD OF YOUR TRUST IN US, AND HOPE WE'LL SERVE YOU WELL. THE NEW AVENGERS WILL BE MYSELF, IRON MAN AND THOR --
-- THE VISION, THE SCARLET WITCH, HAWKEYE AND, AH, WARBIRD, WHO WAS ONE OF US BEFORE AS MS. MARVEL --
-- AND OUR TWO RESERVE MEMBERS, JUSTICE AND FIRESTAR. NOW, IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS...
OH, HE THINKS THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT, DOES HE?
DON'T WORRY, HAWKEYE. HE'LL COME THROUGH. HE ALWAYS DOES.
WHAT? WHAT'S EVERYONE WAITING FOR?
HE'S NOT GONNA SAY IT? COME ON, HE'S GOTTA SAY IT...
IRON MAN, DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS, WILL YOU?
AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING, MR. LIVING LEGEND?
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I'LL SAY IT.

QUICK, MARTY, QUICK!
DON'T MISS THIS!
I GOT IT, I GOT IT. IRIS IN ON CAP, THEN PULL OUT TO INCLUDE THE OTHERS --
-- AS HE SAYS --
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
AND THE CROWD GOES WILD --!

MARVEL COMICS
JUN
#5
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
YOU'RE NOT
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES,
AVENGERS
WE ARE!
SUDDENLY...THE
SQUADRON SUPREME!
BUSIEK • PÉREZ • VEY
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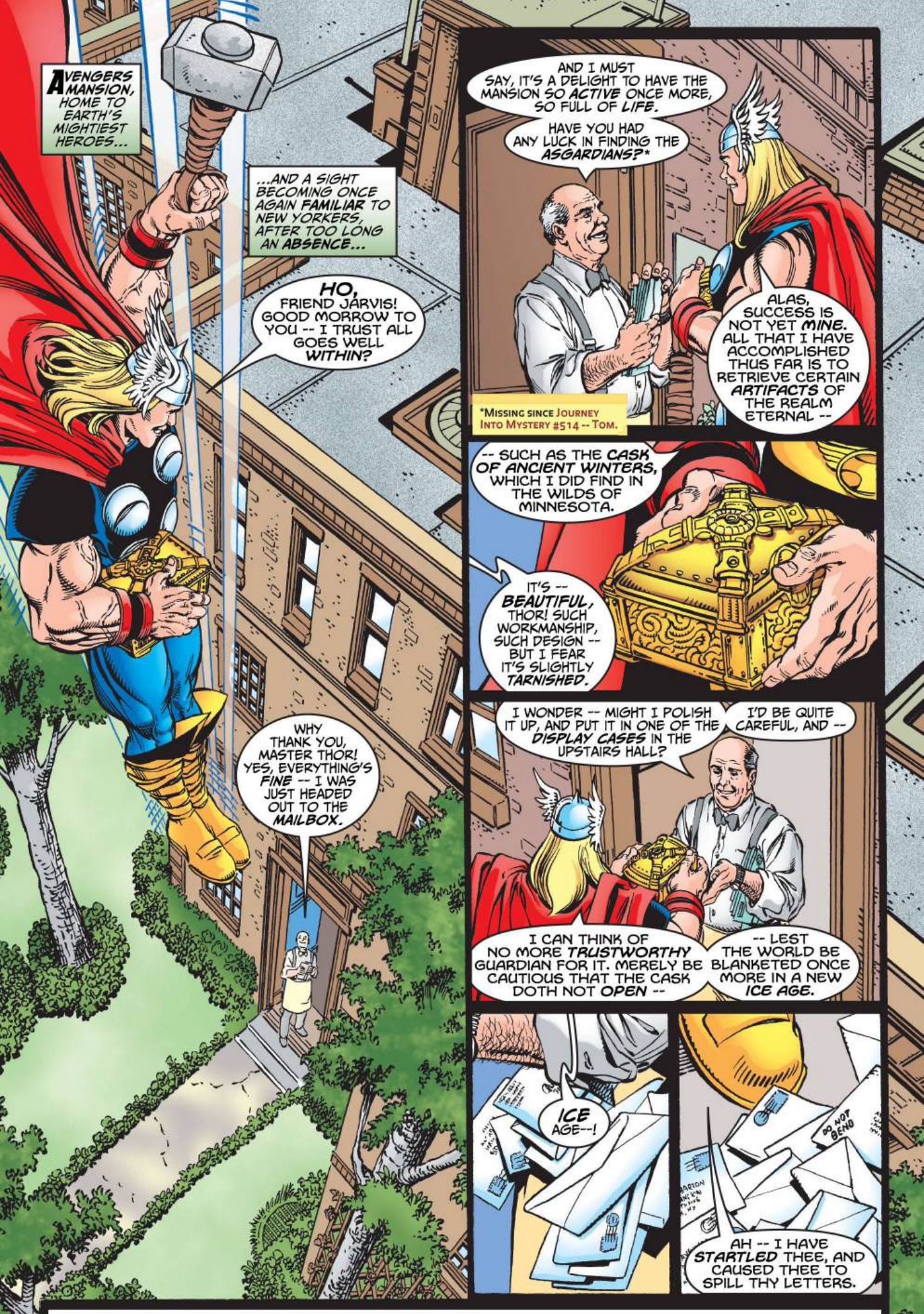

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A QUIET BEGINNING, IT'S TRUE, BUT THE PEACE WON'T LAST LONG, AS THE MIGHTY AVENGERS FIND THEMSELVES THE TARGETS OF...

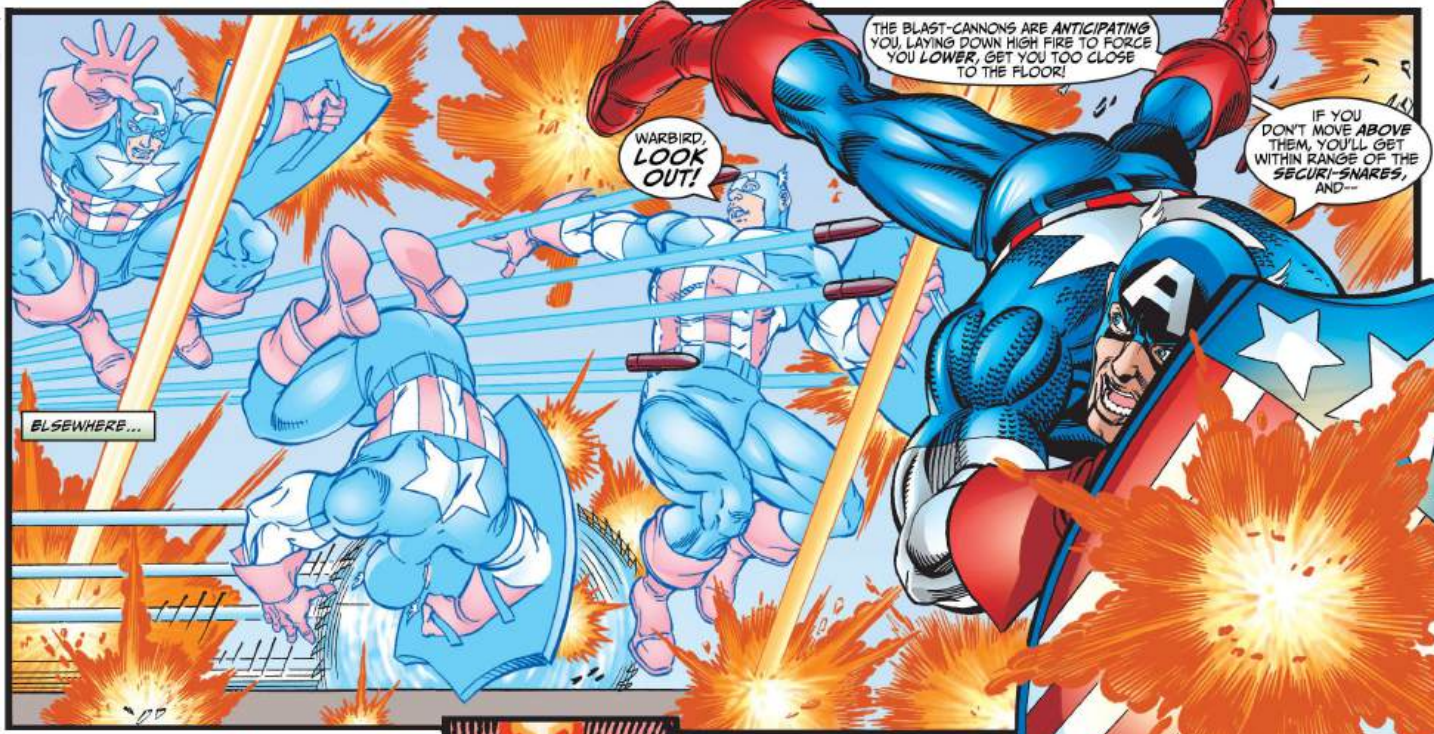
ACCUSATION MOST FOUL

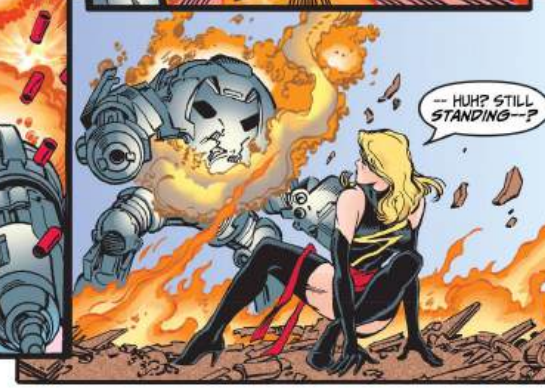
AS/COMICRAFT/DC LETTERS BOB HARRAS CHIEF

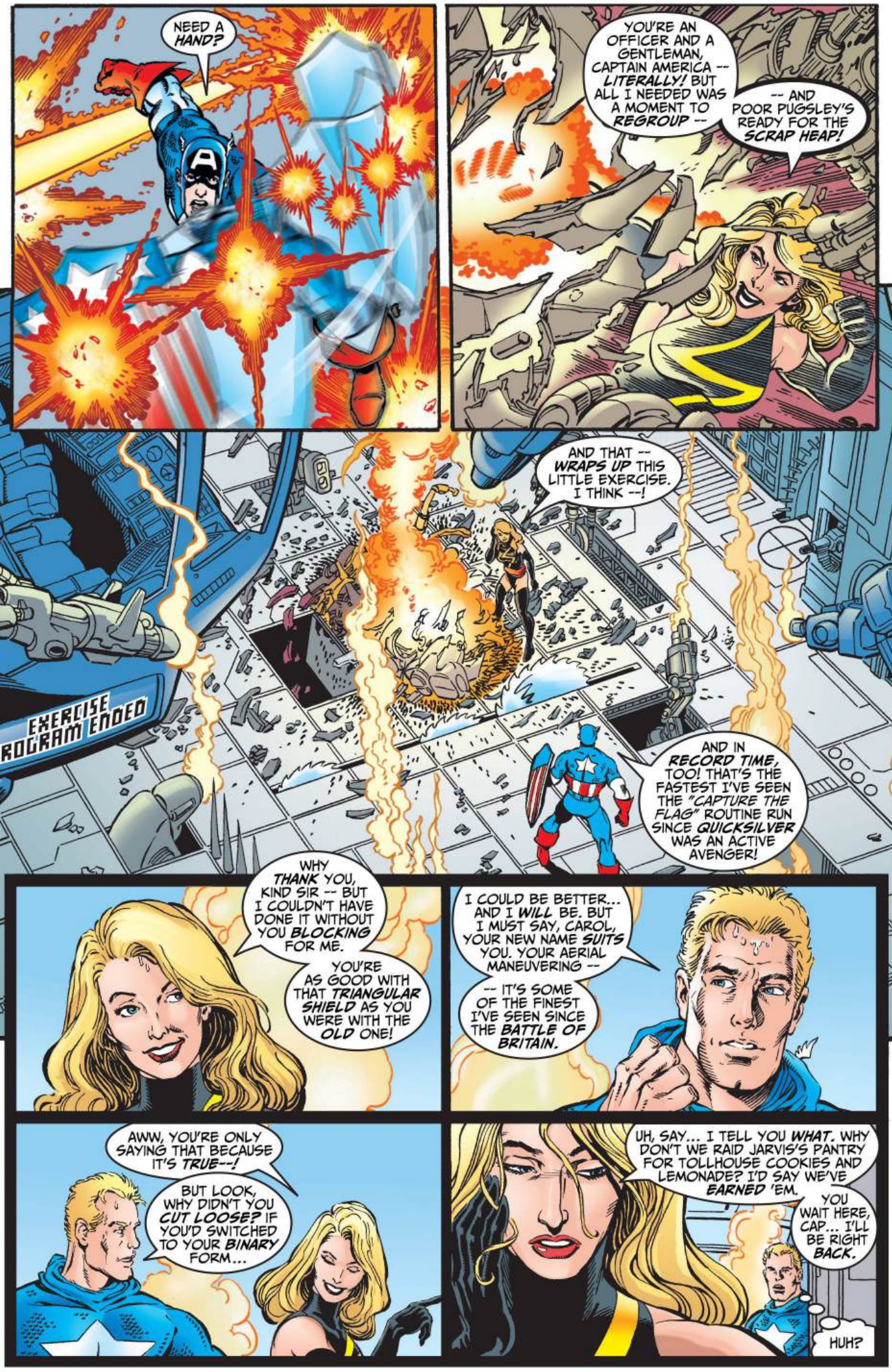
AL VEY FINISHES TOM SMITH COLORS TOM BREVOORT EDITOR

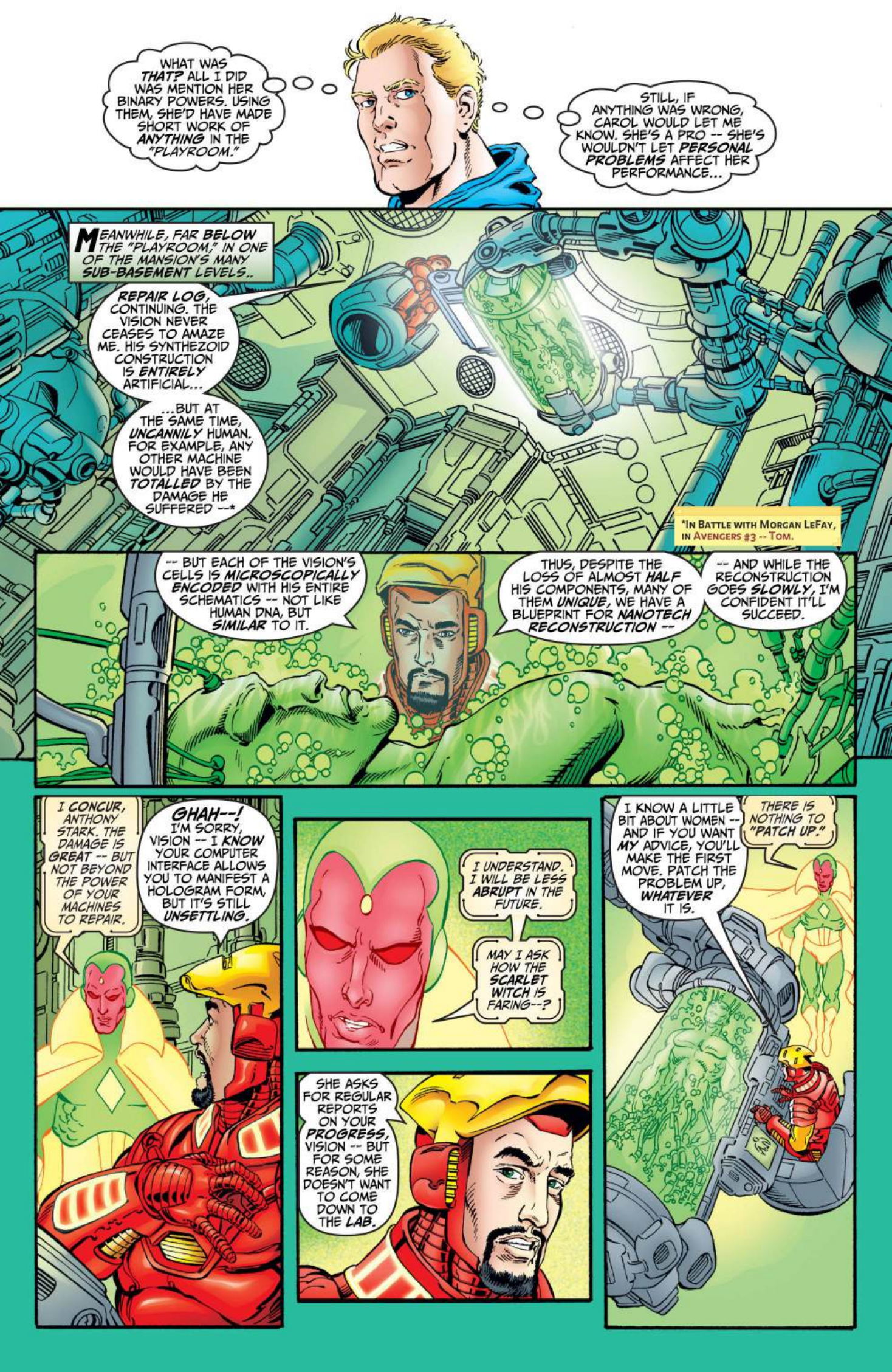
KURT Busiek by GEORGE Pérez

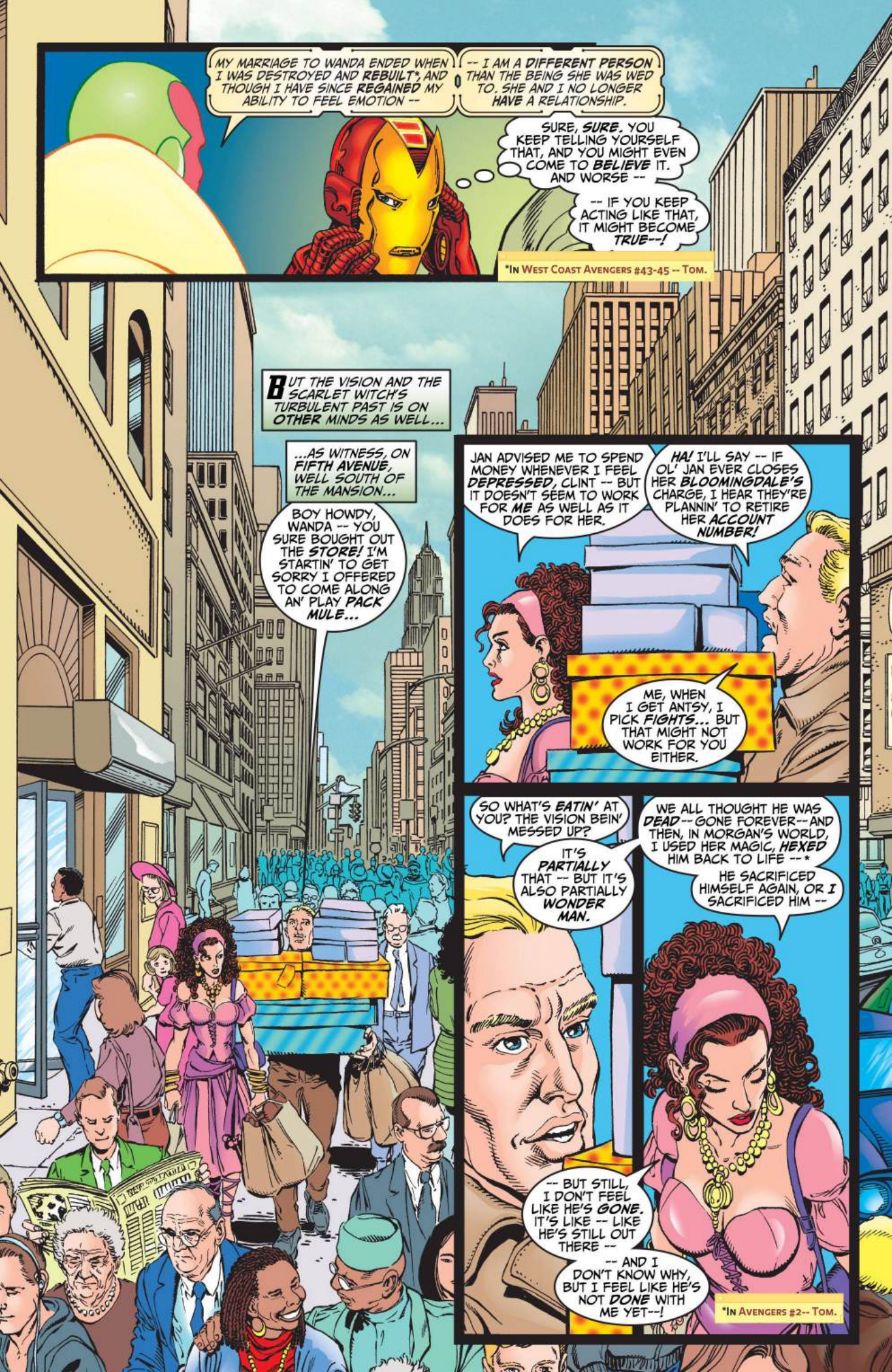
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION!

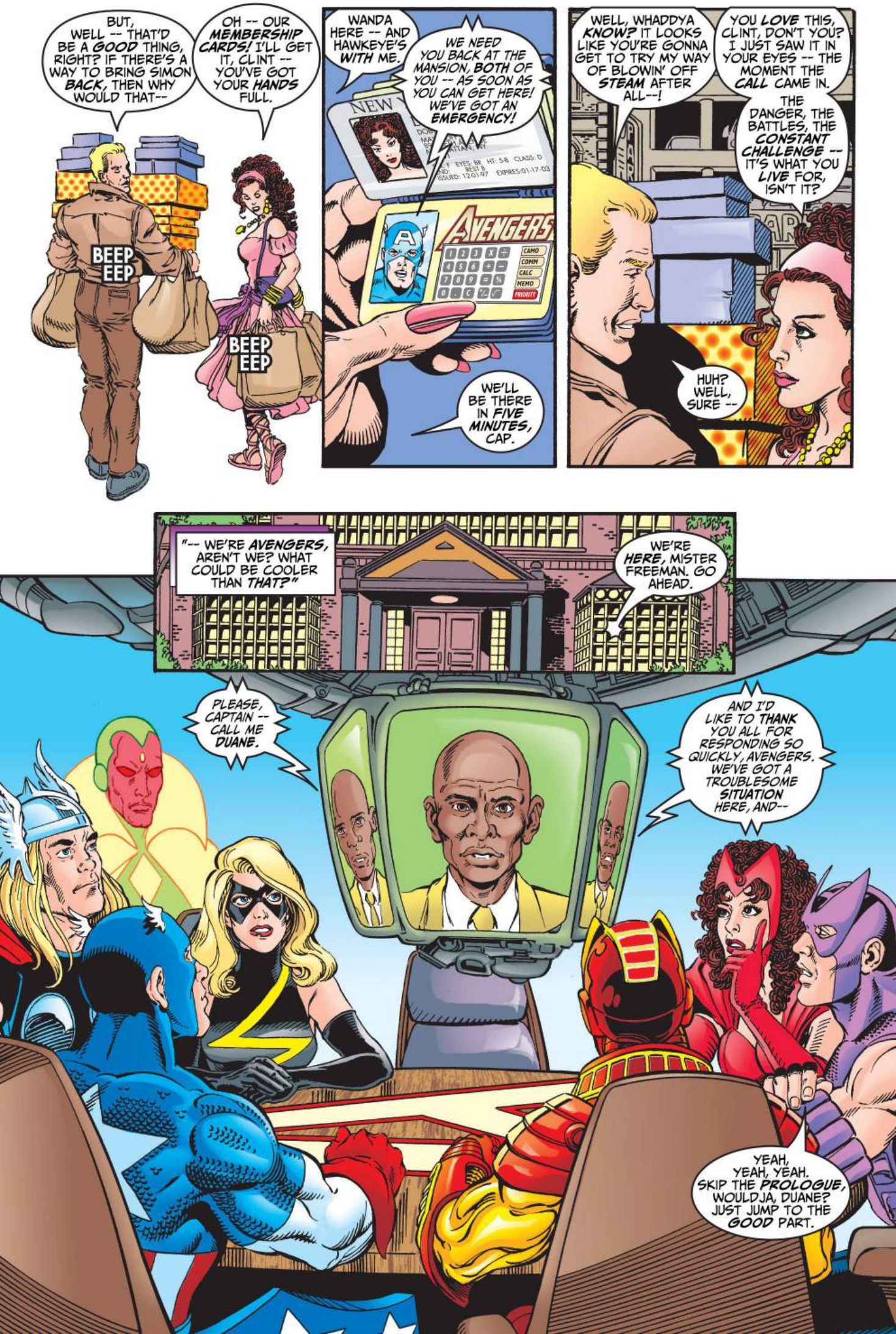





NEED A HAND?
YOU'RE AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA -- LITERALLY! BUT ALL I NEEDED WAS A MOMENT TO REGROUP --
-- AND POOR PUGSLEY'S READY FOR THE SCRAP HEAP!
AND THAT -- WRAPS UP THIS LITTLE EXERCISE. I THINK --!
EXERCISE PROGRAM ENDED
AND IN RECORD TIME, TOO! THAT'S THE FASTEST I'VE SEEN THE "CAPTURE THE FLAG" ROUTINE RUN SINCE QUICKSILVER WAS AN ACTIVE AVENGER!
WHY THANK YOU, KIND SIR -- BUT I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU BLOCKING FOR ME.
YOU'RE AS GOOD WITH THAT TRIANGULAR SHIELD AS YOU WERE WITH THE OLD ONE!
I COULD BE BETTER... AND I WILL BE. BUT I MUST SAY, CAROL, YOUR NEW NAME SUITS YOU. YOUR AERIAL MANEUVERING --
-- IT'S SOME OF THE FINEST I'VE SEEN SINCE THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.
AWW, YOU'RE ONLY SAYING THAT BECAUSE IT'S TRUE--!
BUT LOOK, WHY DIDN'T YOU CUT LOOSE? IF YOU'D SWITCHED TO YOUR BINARY FORM...
UH, SAY... I TELL YOU WHAT. WHY DON'T WE RAID JARVIS'S PANTRY FOR TOLLHOUSE COOKIES AND LEMONADE? I'D SAY WE'VE EARNED 'EM.
YOU WAIT HERE, CAP... I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
HUH?


WHAT WAS THAT? ALL I DID WAS MENTION HER BINARY POWERS. USING THEM, SHE'D HAVE MADE SHORT WORK OF ANYTHING IN THE "PLAYROOM."
STILL, IF ANYTHING WAS WRONG, CAROL WOULD LET ME KNOW. SHE'S A PRO -- SHE'S WOULDN'T LET PERSONAL PROBLEMS AFFECT HER PERFORMANCE...
MEANWHILE, FAR BELOW THE "PLAYROOM," IN ONE OF THE MANSION'S MANY SUB-BASEMENT LEVELS..
REPAIR LOG, CONTINUING. THE VISION NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME. HIS SYNTHEZOID CONSTRUCTION IS ENTIRELY ARTIFICIAL...
...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, UNCANNILY HUMAN. FOR EXAMPLE, ANY OTHER MACHINE WOULD HAVE BEEN TOTALLED BY THE DAMAGE HE SUFFERED --*
*IN BATTLE WITH MORGAN LEFAY, IN AVENGERS #3 -- TOM.
-- BUT EACH OF THE VISION'S CELLS IS MICROSCOPICALLY ENCODED WITH HIS ENTIRE SCHEMATICS -- NOT LIKE HUMAN DNA, BUT SIMILAR TO IT.
THUS, DESPITE THE LOSS OF ALMOST HALF HIS COMPONENTS, MANY OF THEM UNIQUE, WE HAVE A BLUEPRINT FOR NANOTECH RECONSTRUCTION --
-- AND WHILE THE RECONSTRUCTION GOES SLOWLY, I'M CONFIDENT IT'LL SUCCEED.
I CONCUR, ANTHONY STARK. THE DAMAGE IS GREAT -- BUT NOT BEYOND THE POWER OF YOUR MACHINES TO REPAIR.
GHAH--! I'M SORRY, VISION -- I KNOW YOUR COMPUTER INTERFACE ALLOWS YOU TO MANIFEST A HOLOGRAM FORM, BUT IT'S STILL UNSETTLING.
I UNDERSTAND. I WILL BE LESS ABRUPT IN THE FUTURE.
MAY I ASK HOW THE SCARLET WITCH IS FARING--?
SHE ASKS FOR REGULAR REPORTS ON YOUR PROGRESS, VISION -- BUT FOR SOME REASON, SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME DOWN TO THE LAB.
I KNOW A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WOMEN -- AND IF YOU WANT MY ADVICE, YOU'LL MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. PATCH THE PROBLEM UP, WHATEVER IT IS.
THERE IS NOTHING TO "PATCH UP."


MY MARRIAGE TO WANDA ENDED WHEN I WAS DESTROYED AND REBUILT*, AND THOUGH I HAVE SINCE REGAINED MY ABILITY TO FEEL EMOTION --
-- I AM A DIFFERENT PERSON THAN THE BEING SHE WAS WED TO. SHE AND I NO LONGER HAVE A RELATIONSHIP.
SURE, SURE. YOU KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT, AND YOU MIGHT EVEN COME TO BELIEVE IT. AND WORSE --
-- IF YOU KEEP ACTING LIKE THAT, IT MIGHT BECOME TRUE--!
*IN WEST COAST AVENGERS #43-45 -- TOM.
BUT THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH'S TURBULENT PAST IS ON OTHER MINDS AS WELL...
...AS WITNESS, ON FIFTH AVENUE, WELL SOUTH OF THE MANSION...
BOY HOWDY, WANDA -- YOU SURE BOUGHT OUT THE STORE! I'M STARTIN' TO GET SORRY I OFFERED TO COME ALONG AN' PLAY PACK MULE...
JAN ADVISED ME TO SPEND MONEY WHENEVER I FEEL DEPRESSED, CLINT -- BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO WORK FOR ME AS WELL AS IT DOES FOR HER.
HA! I'LL SAY -- IF OL' JAN EVER CLOSES HER BLOOMINGDALE'S CHARGE, I HEAR THEY'RE PLANNIN' TO RETIRE HER ACCOUNT NUMBER!
ME, WHEN I GET ANTSY, I PICK FIGHTS... BUT THAT MIGHT NOT WORK FOR YOU EITHER.
SO WHAT'S EATIN' AT YOU? THE VISION BEIN' MESSED UP?
IT'S PARTIALLY THAT -- BUT IT'S ALSO PARTIALLY WONDER MAN.
WE ALL THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD -- GONE FOREVER -- AND THEN, IN MORGAN'S WORLD, I USED HER MAGIC, HEXED HIM BACK TO LIFE --*
HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF AGAIN, OR I SACRIFICED HIM --
-- BUT STILL, I DON'T FEEL LIKE HE'S GONE. IT'S LIKE -- LIKE HE'S STILL OUT THERE --
-- AND I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I FEEL LIKE HE'S NOT DONE WITH ME YET--!
*IN AVENGERS #2-- TOM.


BUT, WELL -- THAT'D BE A GOOD THING, RIGHT? IF THERE'S A WAY TO BRING SIMON BACK, THEN WHY WOULD THAT--
OH -- OUR MEMBERSHIP CARDS! I'LL GET IT, CLINT -- YOU'VE GOT YOUR HANDS FULL.
BEEP EEP
BEEP EEP
WANDA HERE -- AND HAWKEYE'S WITH ME.
WE NEED YOU BACK AT THE MANSION, BOTH OF YOU -- AS SOON AS YOU CAN GET HERE! WE'VE GOT AN EMERGENCY!
NEW
AVENGERS
CAMO
COMM
CALC
MEMO
PRIORITY
WE'LL BE THERE IN FIVE MINUTES, CAP.
WELL, WHADDYA KNOW? IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET TO TRY MY WAY OF BLOWIN' OFF STEAM AFTER ALL--!
YOU LOVE THIS, CLINT, DON'T YOU? I JUST SAW IT IN YOUR EYES -- THE MOMENT THE CALL CAME IN.
THE DANGER, THE BATTLES, THE CONSTANT CHALLENGE -- IT'S WHAT YOU LIVE FOR, ISN'T IT?
HUH? WELL, SURE --
"-- WE'RE AVENGERS, AREN'T WE? WHAT COULD BE COOLER THAN THAT?"
WE'RE HERE, MISTER FREEMAN. GO AHEAD.
PLEASE, CAPTAIN -- CALL ME DUANE.
AND I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR RESPONDING SO QUICKLY, AVENGERS. WE'VE GOT A TROUBLESOME SITUATION HERE, AND--
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH. SKIP THE PROLOGUE, WOULDJA, DUANE? JUST JUMP TO THE GOOD PART.

"FINE, HAWKEYE. IT STARTED WITH A SUNKEN ALIEN SPACE-CRAFT, FOUND BY S.H.I.E.L.D. INVESTIGATORS ON THE SEAFLOOR OFF OF NORTHERN MAINE.

"IT'S THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN PART OF THANOS'S SPACE FLEET -- AND TO HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN AND CRASHED YEARS AGO.*

*CIRCA AVENGERS #125 -- TOM.

"WE SENT OUT A PROJECT: PEGASUS RECOVERY TEAM TO INVESTIGATE. THE TEAM TRAVELED BY COMMERCIAL AIRLINER, FOR SECURITY REASONS --

SIDNEY KEITH, MISSION CHIEF

JESSICA KNOWLES

JEROME N'TUBA

LeANN MARGOLIS

DAVIS KENT

FAITH BARROWS

SEAMUS McANN

CHAMPIONAIR

"-- BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THE PLANE CRASHED, FOR REASONS WE CAN'T YET DETERMINE. IT'S STILL AFLOAT, AND MOST OF THE PASSENGERS ALIVE --

"-- BUT FRANKLY, WE SUSPECT FOUL PLAY."

WE WANT YOU TO HELP RESCUE THOSE PASSENGERS -- AND TO BE READY, IN CASE WHATEVER CAUSED THE PLANE TO CRASH IS STILL OUT THERE.

WE'D PREFER TO KEEP THIS ALL QUIET, OF COURSE --

WAIT A MINUTE. YOU'RE SAYING THE GOVERNMENT MAYBE GOT CIVILIANS KILLED -- AND YOU WANT THE AVENGERS TO HELP YOU COVER IT --

THAT'S ENOUGH, HAWKEYE. EVERY MOMENT THAT PASSES PUTS LIVES AT RISK.

WE'RE ON OUR WAY, MR. FREEMAN.

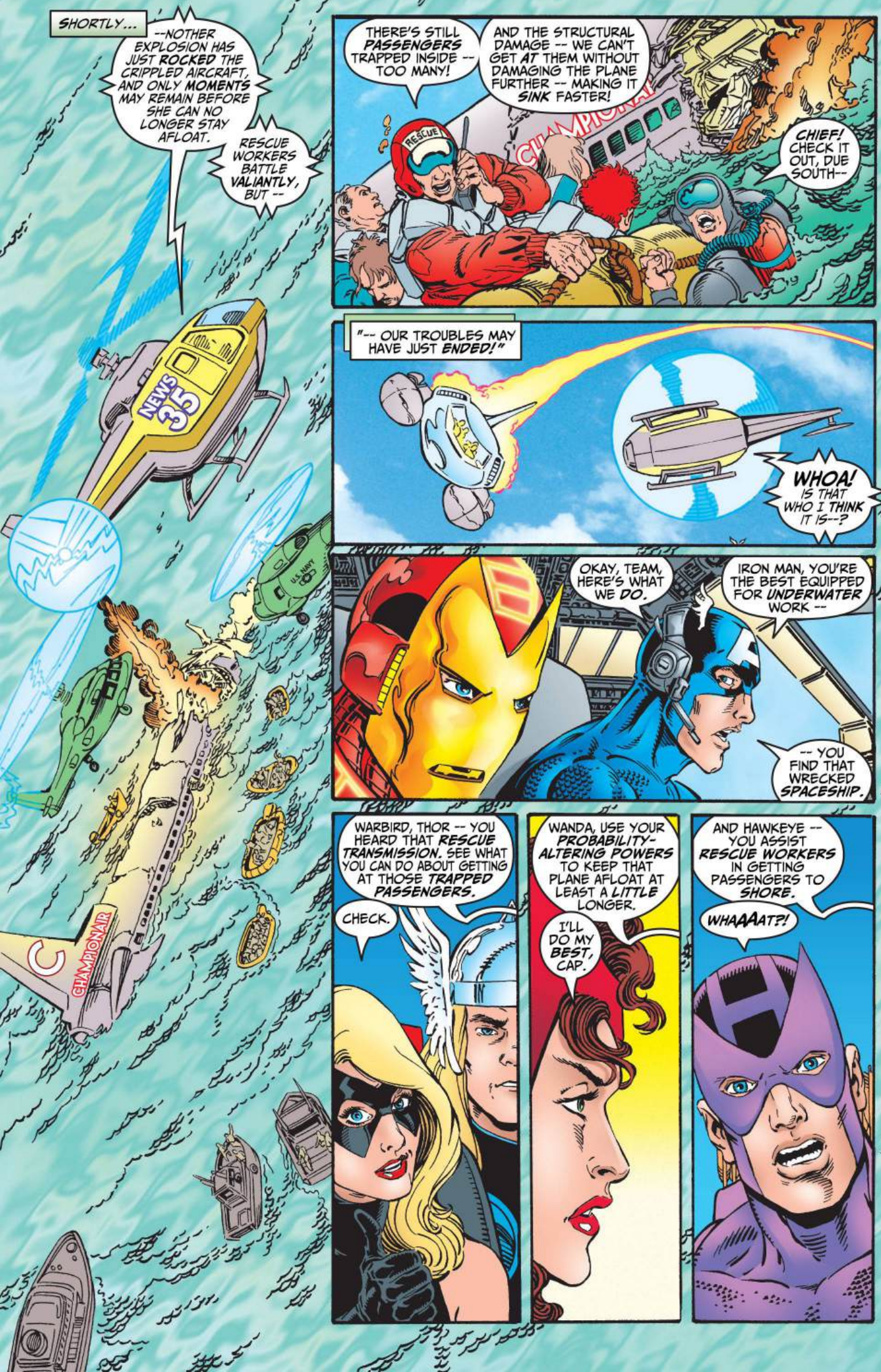
VISION-- SINCE YOU'RE CONFINED TO THE MANSION AT PRESENT, YOU'LL HANDLE MONITOR DUTY AND COMMUNICATIONS.

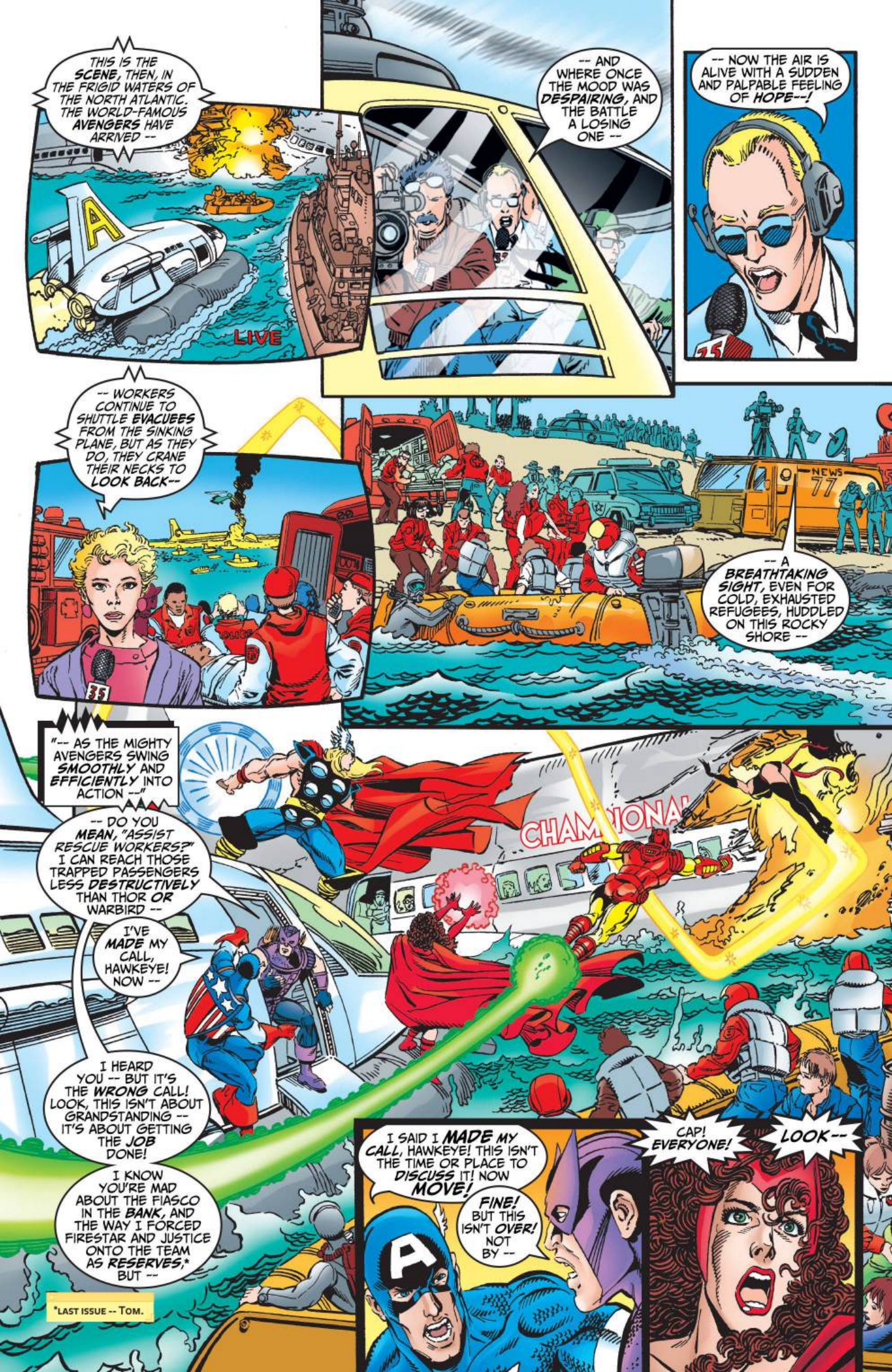
THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM FOR YOU, WILL IT?

NOT AT ALL. I DO NOT NEED A BODY FOR SUCH SIMPLE FUNCTIONS. STILL, I CONFESS -- I WISH I WAS GOING WITH YOU.

YOU WILL BE, VISION -- SOONER THAN YOU KNOW. COUNT ON IT.

NOW COME ON, AVENGERS -- LET'S ROLL!

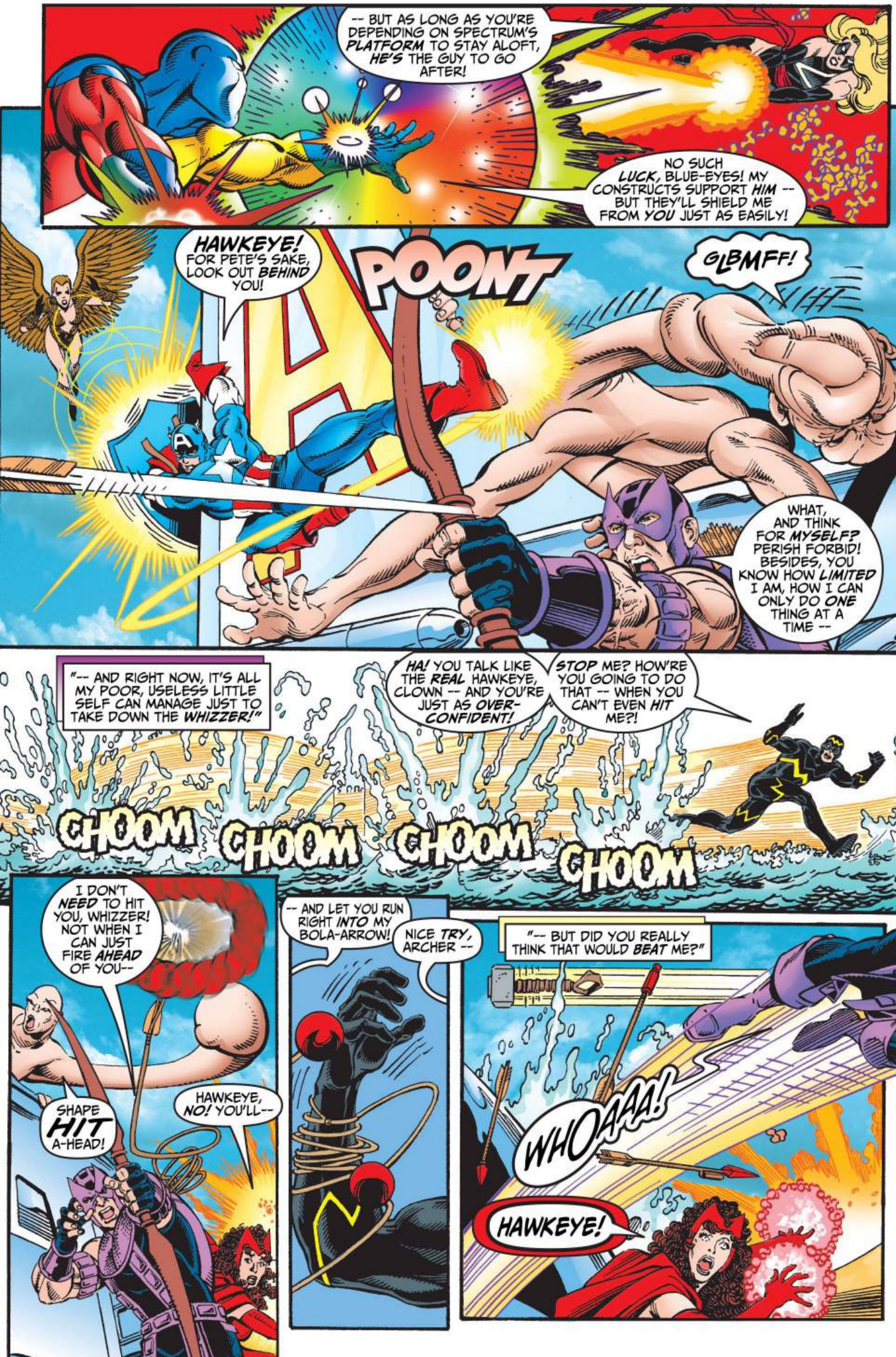

SHORTLY...
--NOTHER EXPLOSION HAS JUST ROCKED THE CRIPPLED AIRCRAFT, AND ONLY MOMENTS MAY REMAIN BEFORE SHE CAN NO LONGER STAY AFLOAT.
RESCUE WORKERS BATTLE VALIANTLY, BUT --
THERE'S STILL PASSENGERS TRAPPED INSIDE -- TOO MANY!
AND THE STRUCTURAL DAMAGE -- WE CAN'T GET AT THEM WITHOUT DAMAGING THE PLANE FURTHER -- MAKING IT SINK FASTER!
RESCUE
CHIEF! CHECK IT OUT, DUE SOUTH--
NEWS 35
"-- OUR TROUBLES MAY HAVE JUST ENDED!"
WHOA! IS THAT WHO I THINK IT IS--?
U.S. NAVY
OKAY, TEAM, HERE'S WHAT WE DO.
IRON MAN, YOU'RE THE BEST EQUIPPED FOR UNDERWATER WORK --
-- YOU FIND THAT WRECKED SPACESHIP.
CHAMPION AIR
WARBIRD, THOR -- YOU HEARD THAT RESCUE TRANSMISSION. SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT GETTING AT THOSE TRAPPED PASSENGERS.
CHECK.
WANDA, USE YOUR PROBABILITY-ALTERING POWERS TO KEEP THAT PLANE AFLOAT AT LEAST A LITTLE LONGER.
I'LL DO MY BEST, CAP.
AND HAWKEYE -- YOU ASSIST RESCUE WORKERS IN GETTING PASSENGERS TO SHORE.
WHAAAAT?!

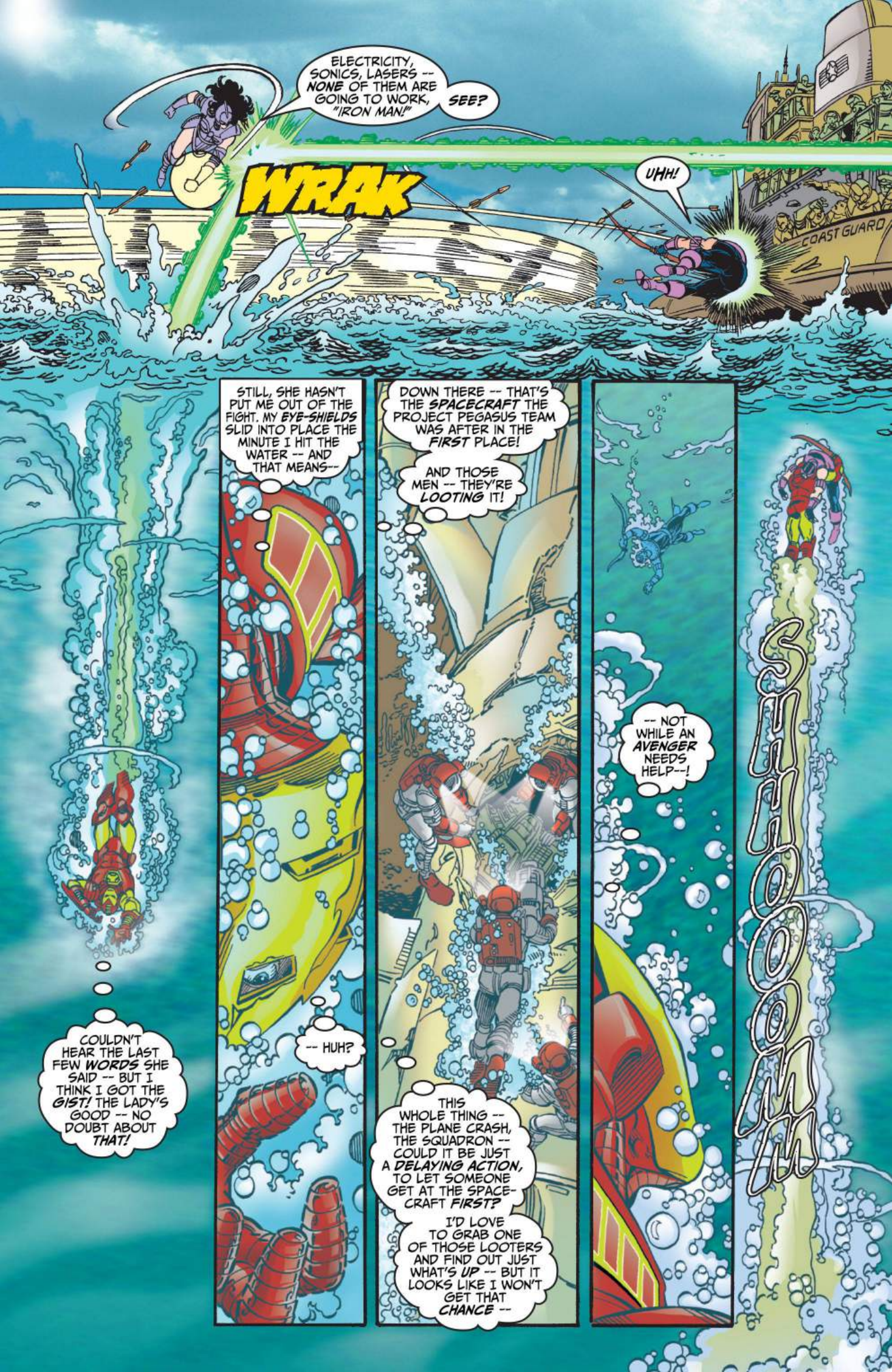

THIS IS THE SCENE, THEN, IN THE FRIGID WATERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC. THE WORLD-FAMOUS AVENGERS HAVE ARRIVED --
LIVE
-- AND WHERE ONCE THE MOOD WAS DESPAIRING, AND THE BATTLE A LOSING ONE --
-- NOW THE AIR IS ALIVE WITH A SUDDEN AND PALPABLE FEELING OF HOPE--!
-- WORKERS CONTINUE TO SHUTTLE EVACUEES FROM THE SINKING PLANE, BUT AS THEY DO, THEY CRANE THEIR NECKS TO LOOK BACK--
NEWS 77
-- A BREATHTAKING SIGHT, EVEN FOR COLD, EXHAUSTED REFUGEES, HUDDLED ON THIS ROCKY SHORE --
"-- AS THE MIGHTY AVENGERS SWING SMOOTHLY AND EFFICIENTLY INTO ACTION --"
-- DO YOU MEAN, "ASSIST RESCUE WORKERS?" I CAN REACH THOSE TRAPPED PASSENGERS LESS DESTRUCTIVELY THAN THOR OR WARBIRD --
I'VE MADE MY CALL, HAWKEYE! NOW --
I HEARD YOU -- BUT IT'S THE WRONG CALL! LOOK, THIS ISN'T ABOUT GRANDSTANDING -- IT'S ABOUT GETTING THE JOB DONE!
I KNOW YOU'RE MAD ABOUT THE FIASCO IN THE BANK, AND THE WAY I FORCED FIRESTAR AND JUSTICE ONTO THE TEAM AS RESERVES,* BUT --
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
I SAID I MADE MY CALL, HAWKEYE! THIS ISN'T THE TIME OR PLACE TO DISCUSS IT! NOW MOVE!
FINE! BUT THIS ISN'T OVER! NOT BY --
CAP! EVERYONE!
LOOK --

"-- UP IN THE SKY!"
NOW THERE'S A SIGHT, EH, HYPERION? SIX LITTLE RATS, CAUGHT IN A TRAP -- AND WE'RE THE TRAP!
CAN THE SMART REMARKS, DR. SPECTRUM -- THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH THIS -- DIDN'T YOU, AVENGERS, OR WHOEVER YOU REALLY ARE? YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD EVERYONE FOOLED!
BUT YOU DIDN'T COUNT ON US, DID YOU? YOU DIDN'T COUNT ON THE SQUADRON SUPREME!
DR. SPECTRUM. SKYLARK. THE SHAPE. HAYWIRE. POWER PRINCESS. HYPERION. WHIZZER. MOONGLOW.
A WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER HEROES -- BUT NOT THIS WORLD'S.
THE CHAMPIONS OF A PARALLEL REALITY, THEY HAVE COME IN CONFLICT WITH THE AVENGERS AND OTHERS OF THIS WORLD'S HEROES OVER THE YEARS --
-- BUT RECENTLY, WHILE SAVING THEIR WORLD FROM A COSMIC THREAT, THEY WERE CAST OUT OF THEIR OWN UNIVERSE AND INTO OURS --
-- AND HAVE REMAINED TRAPPED HERE EVER SINCE, SEARCHING FOR A WAY BACK, A WAY HOME.
BUT NOW --

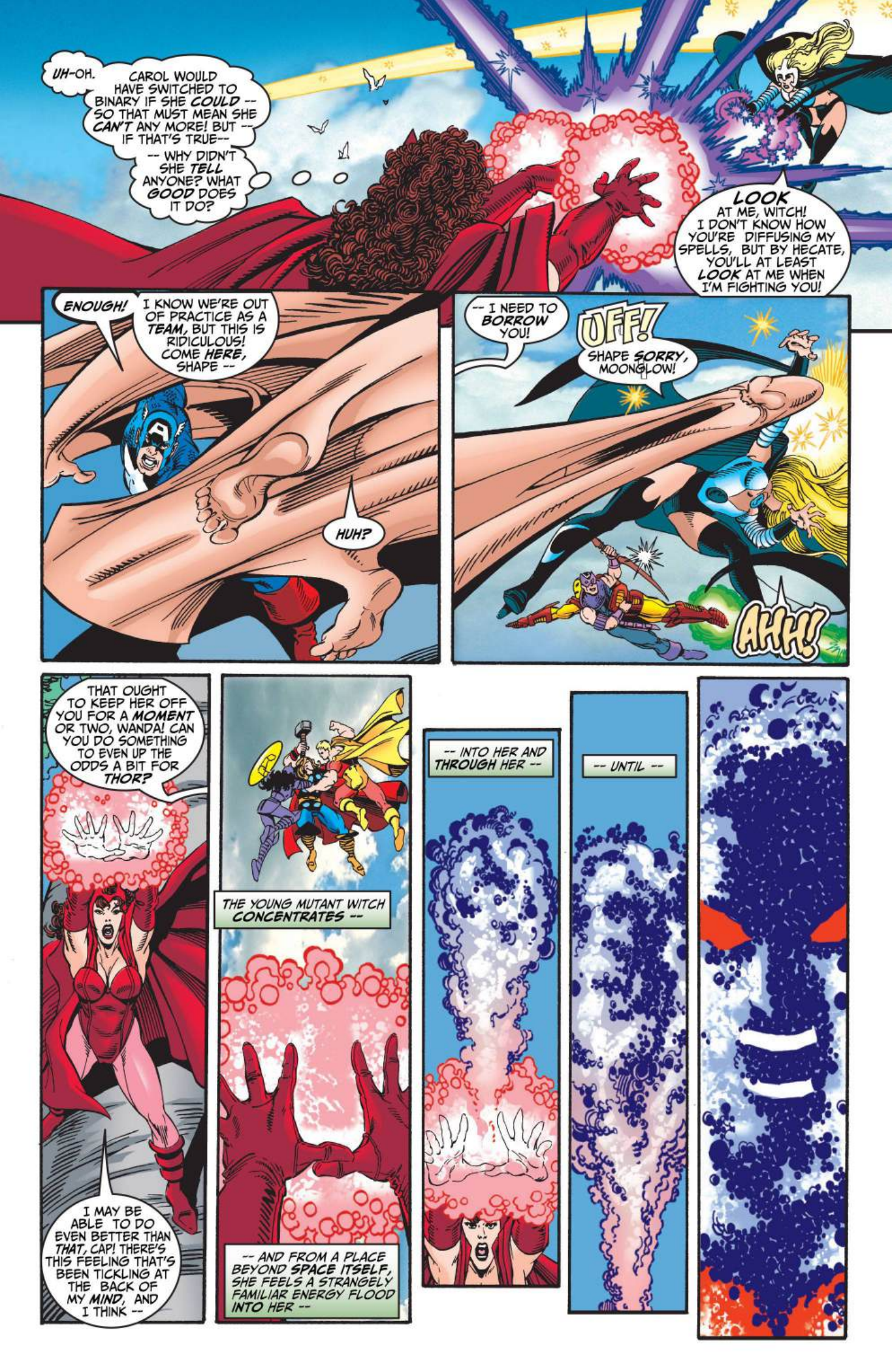
WE WERE NEVER CLOSE WITH THE AVENGERS -- BUT THEY WON OUR RESPECT, YOU PHONIES! THEY DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS!
SHAPE STICK TONGUE OUT AT BAD MANS.
NEWS 35
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, HYPERION? WE'RE HERE TO HELP RESCUE THIS AIRCRAFT -- AND EVERY MOMENT COUNTS!
IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT SOMETHING, JOIN US -- WE'LL TALK AFTERWARDS!
FIVE'LL GET YOU TEN THEY'RE BEING MIND-CONTROLLED AGAIN -- BY THE SERPENT CROWN, THE OVER-MIND, MY AUNT PEARL -- ANYBODY!
BUT FOR ALL THAT TALK IN MORGAN'S WORLD, NOBODY CARES WHAT I THINK...!
COULD IT BE?
STARTLING CHARGES
PRACTICALLY UNTHINKABLE
SKRULLS
RECENT MEMORY
THUNDERBOLTS
ONSLAUGHT
FRAGILE HOPE, SUDDENLY
35
VERY WELL THEN, "CAPTAIN", IF YOU WANT TO PLAY IT THIS WAY, I'LL SPELL IT OUT. THE AVENGERS DIED -- FELLED DURING THE ONSLAUGHT DISASTER --
-- AND MOONGLOW'S MYSTIC SCANS REVEAL YOU TO BE NOTHING BUT IMPOSTORS, DEFRAUDING THE WORLD.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN!
WELL, WHATEVER YOU'RE AFTER, WE'RE GOING TO STOP YOU!
I WON'T EVEN DIGNIFY THAT WITH A RESPONSE, HYPERION. NOW CLEAR OUT OF THE WAY -- UNLESS YOU'RE TRYING TO DELAY THIS RESCUE --!
THAT'S IT -- THAT'S THE LAST STRAW! YOU STEAL THE REPUTATION OF A HERO WHOSE BOOTS YOU'RE NOT FIT TO LICK --
-- AND NOW YOU IMPLY THAT WE'RE THE CROOKS HERE? SQUADRON --

"--ATTACK!"
GOOD CALL, WHIZZER.
AND I'LL START IT OFF -- BY SHOWING THIS IMITATION ASGARDIAN WHAT REAL POWER FEELS LIKE!
UHH!
THOU SHOWEST ME NOTHING I HAVE NOT FELT BEFORE, BASE ONE! FOR I ASSURE THEE, I AM THE THUNDER GOD THAT HATH BESTED YOU IN DAYS PAST --
-- AND BY MY FATHER'S BEARD, I WILL BEST THEE AGAIN!
KRAK
H-AKHH!
YOUR REPULSOR RAYS WON'T MAKE IT THROUGH MY FLYING SHIELD, "IRON MAN"! IF YOU WERE THE GENUINE ARTICLE, YOU'D KNOW THAT!
I'VE READ QUASAR'S REPORTS ON YOU, POWER PRINCESS. BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE!
STILL, DON'T WORRY -- I'VE GOT LOTS OF OTHER TRICKS!
A SIMPLE SPELL SHOULD TAKE CARE OF YOU, IMPOSTOR!
SORRY, MOONGLOW -- IT'S NOT THAT EASY!
HER MAGIC-- I CAN FEEL IT! LIKE IT'S ALIVE -- LIKE I COULD COMMUNICATE WITH IT! WHAT'S GOING ON --?
HEY, BABE -- WHAT'S THE STORY? I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU?
SORRY, HAYWIRE --

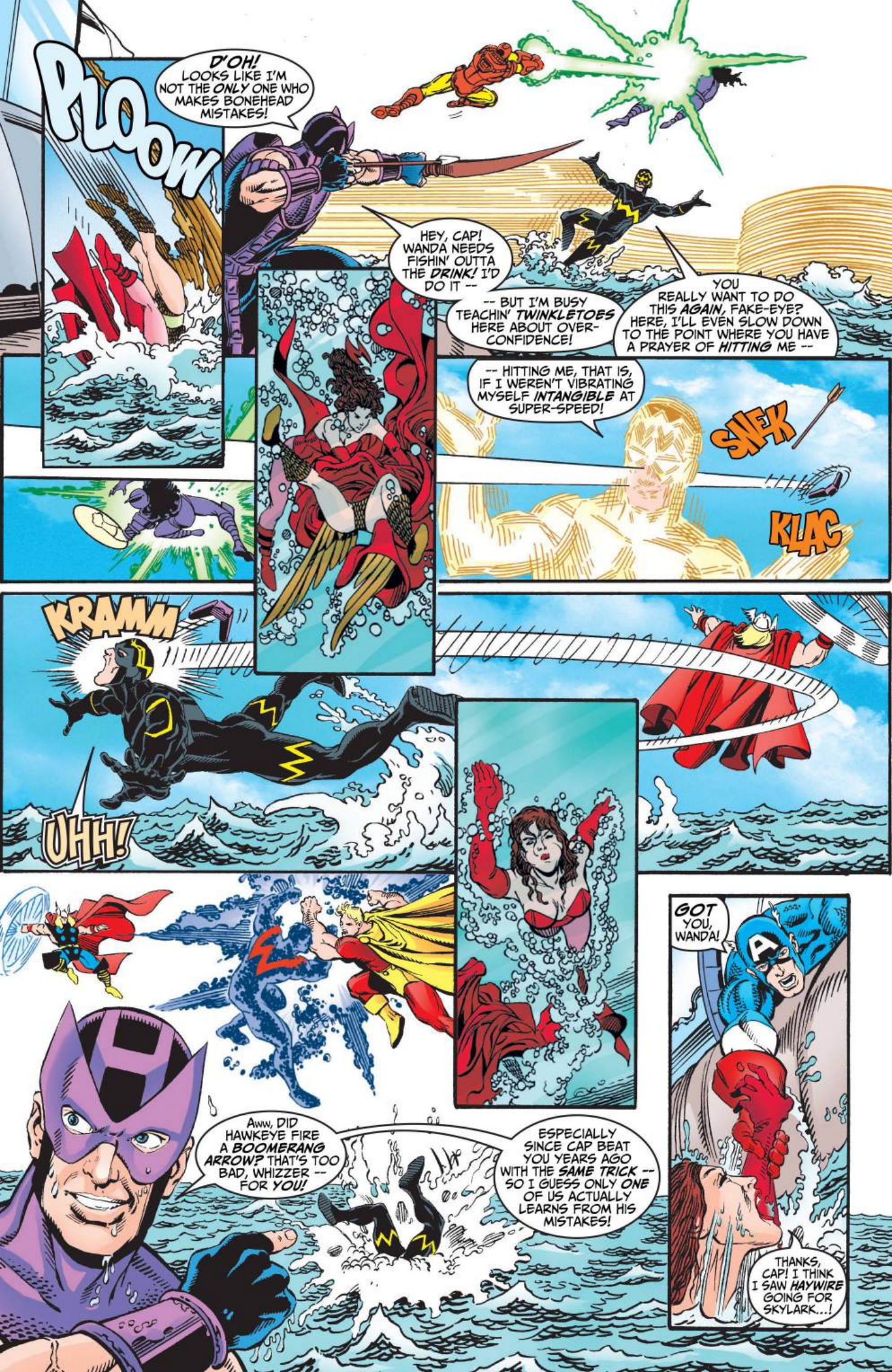

-- BUT AS LONG AS YOU'RE DEPENDING ON SPECTRUM'S PLATFORM TO STAY ALOFT, HE'S THE GUY TO GO AFTER!
NO SUCH LUCK, BLUE-EYES! MY CONSTRUCTS SUPPORT HIM -- BUT THEY'LL SHIELD ME FROM YOU JUST AS EASILY!
HAWKEYE! FOR PETE'S SAKE, LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU!
POONT
GLBMFF!
WHAT, AND THINK FOR MYSELF? PERISH FORBID! BESIDES, YOU KNOW HOW LIMITED I AM, HOW I CAN ONLY DO ONE THING AT A TIME --
"-- AND RIGHT NOW, IT'S ALL MY POOR, USELESS LITTLE SELF CAN MANAGE JUST TO TAKE DOWN THE WHIZZER!"
HA! YOU TALK LIKE THE REAL HAWKEYE, CLOWN -- AND YOU'RE JUST AS OVER-CONFIDENT!
STOP ME? HOW'RE YOU GOING TO DO THAT -- WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN HIT ME?!
CHOOM
CHOOM
CHOOM
CHOOM
I DON'T NEED TO HIT YOU, WHIZZER! NOT WHEN I CAN JUST FIRE AHEAD OF YOU--
SHAPE HIT A-HEAD!
HAWKEYE, NO! YOU'LL--
-- AND LET YOU RUN RIGHT INTO MY BOLA-ARROW!
NICE TRY, ARCHER --
"-- BUT DID YOU REALLY THINK THAT WOULD BEAT ME?"
WHOAAA!
HAWKEYE!


ELECTRICITY, SONICS, LASERS -- NONE OF THEM ARE GOING TO WORK, "IRON MAN!"
SEE?
WRAK
UHH!
COAST GUARD
COULDN'T HEAR THE LAST FEW WORDS SHE SAID -- BUT I THINK I GOT THE GIST! THE LADY'S GOOD -- NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT!
STILL, SHE HASN'T PUT ME OUT OF THE FIGHT. MY EYE-SHIELDS SLID INTO PLACE THE MINUTE I HIT THE WATER -- AND THAT MEANS--
-- HUH?
DOWN THERE -- THAT'S THE SPACECRAFT THE PROJECT PEGASUS TEAM WAS AFTER IN THE FIRST PLACE!
AND THOSE MEN -- THEY'RE LOOTING IT!
THIS WHOLE THING -- THE PLANE CRASH, THE SQUADRON -- COULD IT BE JUST A DELAYING ACTION, TO LET SOMEONE GET AT THE SPACE-CRAFT FIRST?
I'D LOVE TO GRAB ONE OF THOSE LOOTERS AND FIND OUT JUST WHAT'S UP -- BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I WON'T GET THAT CHANCE --
-- NOT WHILE AN AVENGER NEEDS HELP--!
SHABOOM

BUT EVEN AS IRON MAN RESCUES THE GROGGY HAWKEYE --
BRAK
I'VE GOT HIM, BELOVED! NOW BATTER HIM UNCONSCIOUS -- BEFORE HE BREAKS FREE!
WRAK
THUD
I DON'T MUCH LIKE THIS, ZARDA -- BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO EXPOSE THESE IMPOSTORS FOR WHAT THEY TRULY ARE --
HA HA! SHAPE NOT HURT!
WHOA! NO FAIR! NO FAIR!
HAYWIRE OVERBOARD!
WARBIRD! STOP MESSING WITH HAYWIRE AND HELP THOR! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE AVAILABLE WITH ENOUGH POWER!
SWITCH TO YOUR BINARY FORM -- AND BREAK HIM FREE FROM THAT DOUBLE-TEAM!
I'M ON IT, CAP -- CONSIDER HIM FREE!
WARBIRD -- DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? YOU CAN'T GO UP AGAINST HYPERION LIKE THAT!
I SAID SWITCH TO YOUR BINARY FORM! SWITCH TO YOUR --
BAM


UH-OH.
CAROL WOULD HAVE SWITCHED TO BINARY IF SHE COULD -- SO THAT MUST MEAN SHE CAN'T ANY MORE! BUT -- IF THAT'S TRUE--
-- WHY DIDN'T SHE TELL ANYONE? WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO?
LOOK AT ME, WITCH! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE DIFFUSING MY SPELLS, BUT BY HECATE, YOU'LL AT LEAST LOOK AT ME WHEN I'M FIGHTING YOU!
ENOUGH!
I KNOW WE'RE OUT OF PRACTICE AS A TEAM, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS! COME HERE, SHAPE --
HUH?
-- I NEED TO BORROW YOU!
OFF!
SHAPE SORRY, MOONGLOW!
AHH!
THAT OUGHT TO KEEP HER OFF YOU FOR A MOMENT OR TWO, WANDA! CAN YOU DO SOMETHING TO EVEN UP THE ODDS A BIT FOR THOR?
I MAY BE ABLE TO DO EVEN BETTER THAN THAT, CAP! THERE'S THIS FEELING THAT'S BEEN TICKLING AT THE BACK OF MY MIND, AND I THINK --
THE YOUNG MUTANT WITCH CONCENTRATES --
-- AND FROM A PLACE BEYOND SPACE ITSELF, SHE FEELS A STRANGELY FAMILIAR ENERGY FLOOD INTO HER --
-- INTO HER AND THROUGH HER --
-- UNTIL --

SLAM
GET YOUR GRUBBY PAWS OFF THOR, YOU TWO! HE MAY BE A LITTLE POMPOUS FROM TIME TO TIME --
-- BUT HE'S A FRIEND OF MINE!
WONDER MAN --?
WELL, ALL RIGHT! THIS IS STARTING TO GET FUN! I KNEW OL' SIMON COULDN'T HAVE REALLY DIED IN MORGAN'S WORLD* --
-- AFTER ALL, WANDA BROUGHT HIM BACK ONCE ALREADY -- SO WHY NOT TWICE?
*IN #3 -- TOM.
THE SCARLET WITCH I MET COULDN'T DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT, WHOEVER YOU ARE! BUT WHATEVER IT WAS YOU DID --
-- I'M BETTING I CAN STOP IT BY TAKING YOU OUT WITH A SONIC SONG!
FRANKLY, I'M NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENED EITHER, SKYLARK --
-- BUT YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY!
CHK
NEED ANY HELP, WANDA? JUST SAY THE WORD, AND BR'ER HAWKEYE'S BACKIN' YOU UP!
SNK
THANKS FOR THE OFFER, HAWKEYE -- BUT I DON'T THINK IT'LL BE NECESSARY!
HERE, THE SCARLET WITCH IS ON SURER GROUND. HERE, A POWER SHE CAN TRUST. A PAIR OF SIMPLE HEX-SPHERES, AND --
M-MY WINGS -- MALFUNCTIONING! I CAN'T STAY ALOFT ANY MORE!
WANDA -- HER TRAJECTORY! IF YOU DON'T GET OUT OF THE WAY IN TIME --
ZZZT


PLOOM
D'OH! LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO MAKES BONEHEAD MISTAKES!
HEY, CAP! WANDA NEEDS FISHIN' OUTTA THE DRINK! I'D DO IT --
-- BUT I'M BUSY TEACHIN' TWINKLETOES HERE ABOUT OVER-CONFIDENCE!
YOU REALLY WANT TO DO THIS AGAIN, FAKE-EYE? HERE, I'LL EVEN SLOW DOWN TO THE POINT WHERE YOU HAVE A PRAYER OF HITTING ME --
-- HITTING ME, THAT IS, IF I WEREN'T VIBRATING MYSELF INTANGIBLE AT SUPER-SPEED!
SNEK
KLAC
KRAMM
OHH!
GOT YOU, WANDA!
THANKS, CAP! I THINK I SAW HAYWIRE GOING FOR SKYLARK...!
Aww, DID HAWKEYE FIRE A BOOMERANG ARROW? THAT'S TOO BAD, WHIZZER -- FOR YOU!
ESPECIALLY SINCE CAP BEAT YOU YEARS AGO WITH THE SAME TRICK -- SO I GUESS ONLY ONE OF US ACTUALLY LEARNS FROM HIS MISTAKES!

SO OKAY, LET'S SEE HOW EVERYONE ELSE IS --
-- Uh-Oh. HYPERION FINALLY WENT AND GOT THOR MAD--!
I SAY THEE ENOW, BASE VILLAIN!
I CHALLENGE THEE TO SETTLE THIS, NOT BY VILE TREACHERY, BUT BY TIME-HONORED SINGLE COMBAT!
WE TWAIN SHALL BATTLE -- WE, AND NONE OTHER! AND LET HE WHO IS MOST RIGHTEOUS REAP THE VICTORY OF TRUTH!
Oh, YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YOU, YOU TRANSPARENT FAKE!
THAT'S ALL YOU EVER WANTED, ISN'T IT -- TO PLAY THE ROLE OF HERO, NO MATTER WHO GETS HURT. ALL YOU'VE DONE IS FIGHT, AND DELAY US --
-- BUT WE TRIUMPHED ANYWAY, HOLDING YOU BACK --
"-- AND BUYING Dr. SPECTRUM THE TIME HE NEEDED TO SAVE THE SINKING AIRPLANE!"
YOU'D HAVE HAPPILY LET EVERYONE ON THAT PLANE DIE -- AS LONG AS YOU HAD YOUR MOMENT OF STOLEN GLORY IN FRONT OF THE TV CAMERAS!
LIAR!
'TWAS THOU WHO BEGAN THIS COMBAT -- THOU WHO SOUGHT TO KEEP US FROM GIVING SUCCOR TO THE NEEDY! AND NOW THOU CLAIMST --
THOR!
THOR, LET IT GO! THE PLANE IS SAFE -- AND THAT'S WHAT WE CAME HERE TO ACCOMPLISH! THAT'S ALL THAT REALLY MATTERS!
AS FOR THE REST, I DON'T KNOW WHY THE SQUADRON IS SO INSISTENT ON LYING ABOUT US --
-- BUT I'M CONTENT TO STAND ON OUR RECORD. THE PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE US.

"-- WAS THE *STARTLING SIGHT*, EARLIER TODAY, AS THE SQUADRON SUPREME SAVED CHAMPIONAIR FLIGHT 88, AFTER BATTLING THE *AVENGERS* TO A --

"-- DISTURBING ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE PREVIOUSLY-ASSUMED GENUINE *'HEROES' RETURN*,' AS THE WORLD LEARNED THE AVENGERS MAY *NOT* BE --

"-- ADDING TO THE QUESTIONS IS THE APPEARANCE OF *WONDER MAN*, AN AVENGER *KNOWN* TO HAVE DIED BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT DISASTER --"

KLIC

KLIC

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THIS IS WHACKO -- AND I MEAN *TOTALLY* WHACKO! WONDER MAN'S MAYBE *NOT* DEAD AFTER ALL --

-- AN' INSTEAD OF IT BEING *GOOD* NEWS, IT'S TAKEN AS EVIDENCE THAT WE'RE ALL A BUNCH OF *FAKES?!*

HEY, COME TO THINK OF IT -- WHERE *IS* SIMON, ANYWAY?

HE VANISHED WHEN THE *BATTLE* WAS OVER, HAWKEYE. IF YOU HADN'T BEEN INSISTING ON CHASING THE *SQUADRON*, YOU'D HAVE NOTICED.

LOOK, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH WONDER MAN, *TOO* -- BUT HE'S NOT THE ISSUE WE HAVE TO *DEAL* WITH RIGHT NOW.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO TAKE THIS *SERIOUSLY*, AFTER THE THUNDERBOLTS TURNED OUT TO BE *VILLAINS*, AND THE NEWS OF THE *SKRULL* INFILTRATION --*

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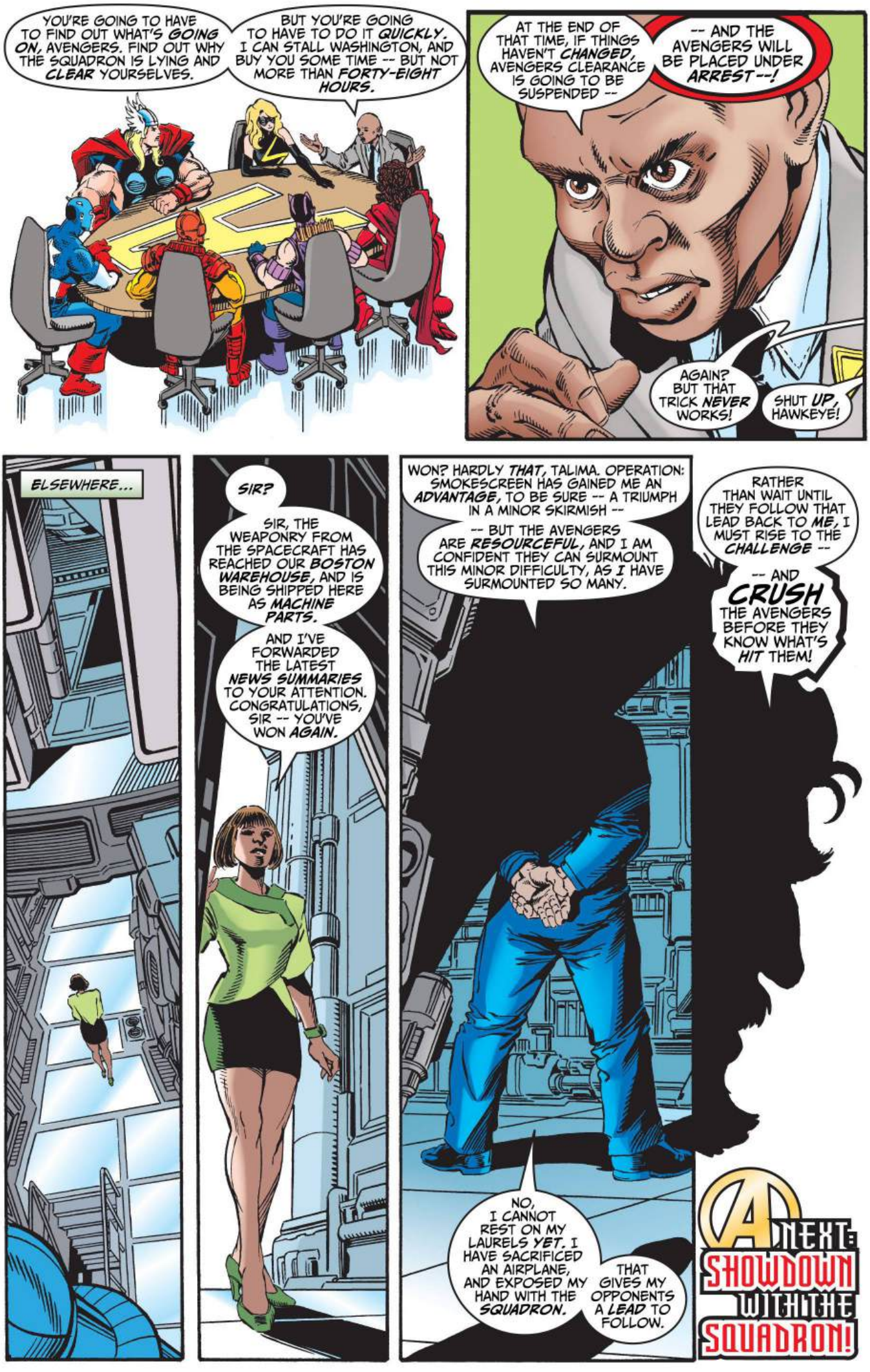
BUT THAT'S *BULL*, FREEMAN! WE'RE THE ONES PUT THE KIBOSH ON THE 'BOLTS' *PLANS!* AND AS FOR THE SKRULLS, CAP --

*IN T-BOLTS #10 AND CAP #6, RESPECTIVELY -- TOM.

IT DOESN'T *MATTER*, HAWKEYE. IT JUST *DOESN'T* MATTER.

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE PUBLIC IS *SCARED*, AND THEY'RE DEMANDING *ACTION*.

I'M ALL *FOR* ACTION, MR. FREEMAN. WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE *DO?*


YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON, AVENGERS. FIND OUT WHY THE SQUADRON IS LYING AND CLEAR YOURSELVES.
BUT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IT QUICKLY. I CAN STALL WASHINGTON, AND BUY YOU SOME TIME -- BUT NOT MORE THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.
AT THE END OF THAT TIME, IF THINGS HAVEN'T CHANGED, AVENGERS CLEARANCE IS GOING TO BE SUSPENDED --
-- AND THE AVENGERS WILL BE PLACED UNDER ARREST --!
AGAIN? BUT THAT TRICK NEVER WORKS!
SHUT UP, HAWKEYE!
ELSEWHERE...
SIR?
SIR, THE WEAPONRY FROM THE SPACECRAFT HAS REACHED OUR BOSTON WAREHOUSE, AND IS BEING SHIPPED HERE AS MACHINE PARTS.
AND I'VE FORWARDED THE LATEST NEWS SUMMARIES TO YOUR ATTENTION. CONGRATULATIONS, SIR -- YOU'VE WON AGAIN.
WON? HARDLY THAT, TALIMA. OPERATION: SMOKESCREEN HAS GAINED ME AN ADVANTAGE, TO BE SURE -- A TRIUMPH IN A MINOR SKIRMISH --
-- BUT THE AVENGERS ARE RESOURCEFUL, AND I AM CONFIDENT THEY CAN SURMOUNT THIS MINOR DIFFICULTY, AS I HAVE SURMOUNTED SO MANY.
RATHER THAN WAIT UNTIL THEY FOLLOW THAT LEAD BACK TO ME, I MUST RISE TO THE CHALLENGE --
-- AND CRUSH THE AVENGERS BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT'S HIT THEM!
NO, I CANNOT REST ON MY LAURELS YET. I HAVE SACRIFICED AN AIRPLANE, AND EXPOSED MY HAND WITH THE SQUADRON.
THAT GIVES MY OPPONENTS A LEAD TO FOLLOW.
NEXT: SHOWDOWN WITH THE SQUADRON!

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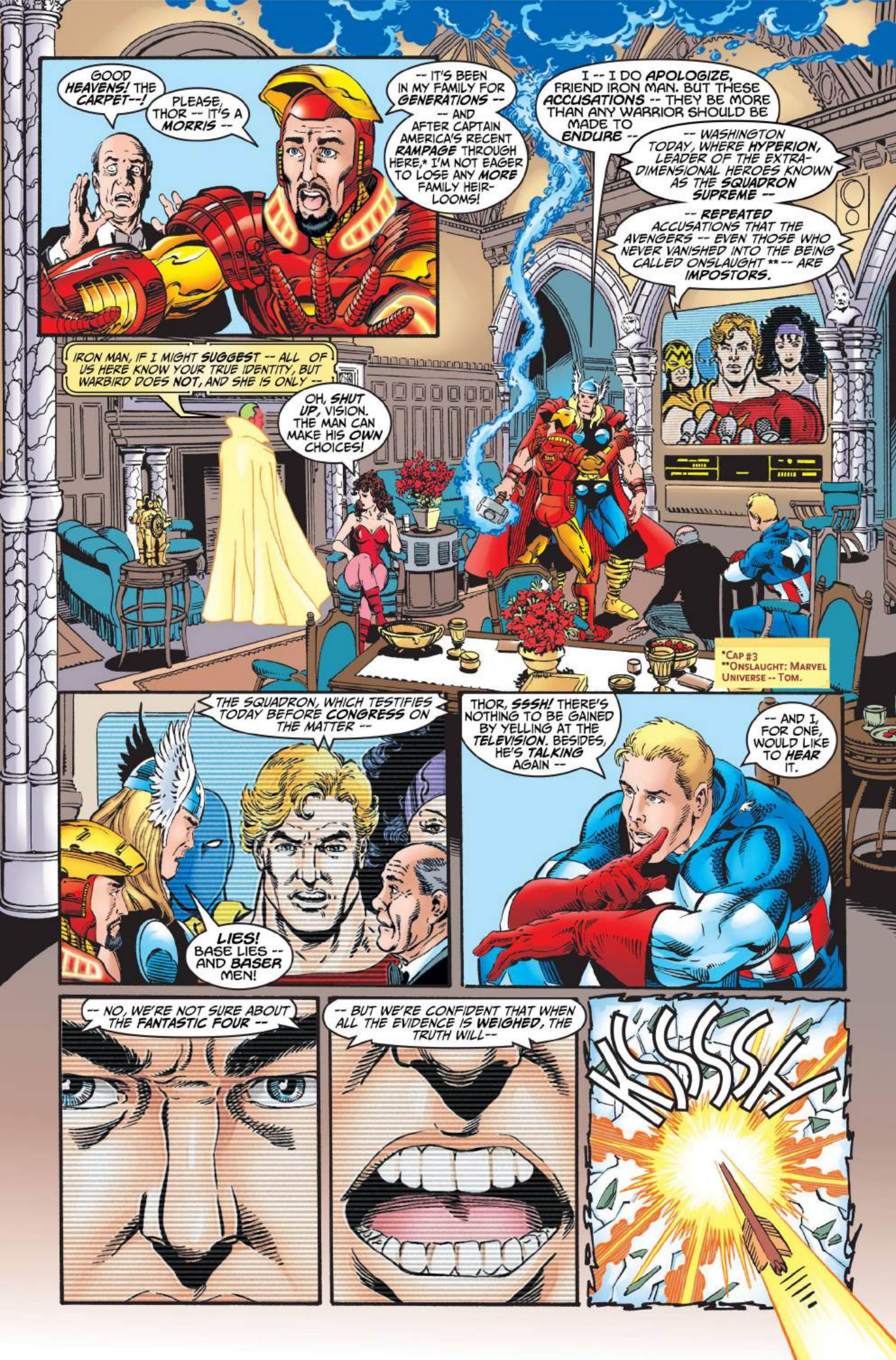
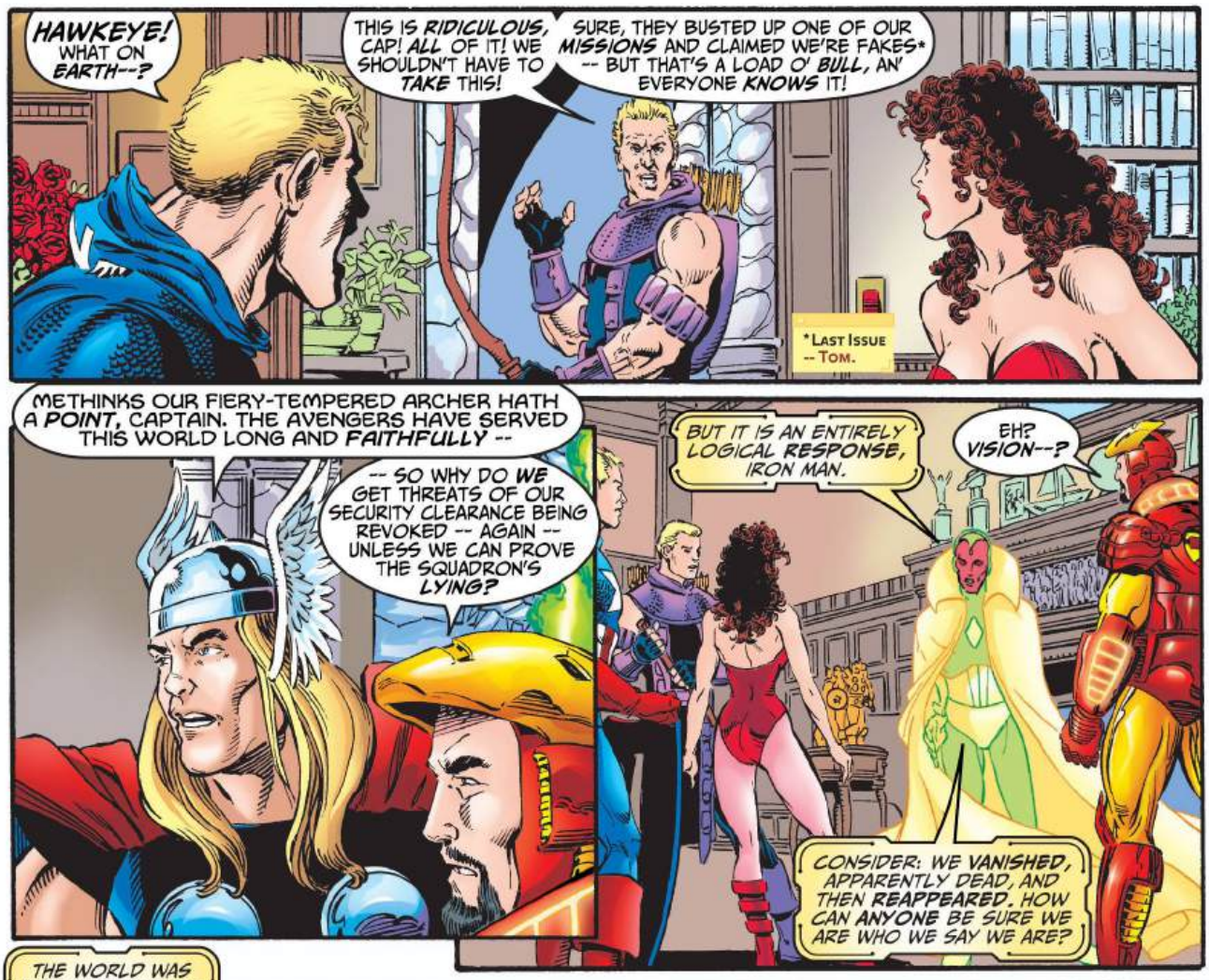
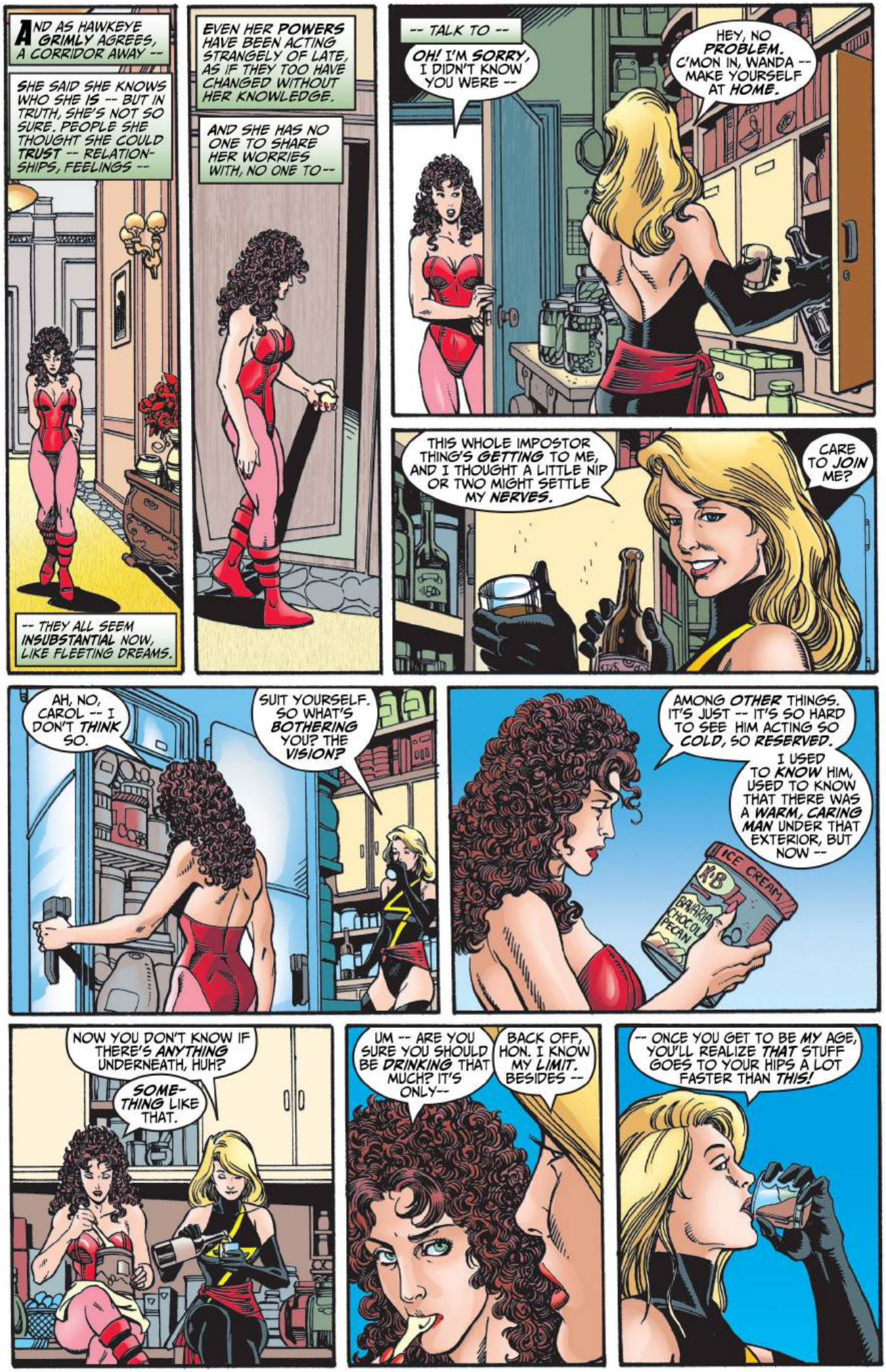
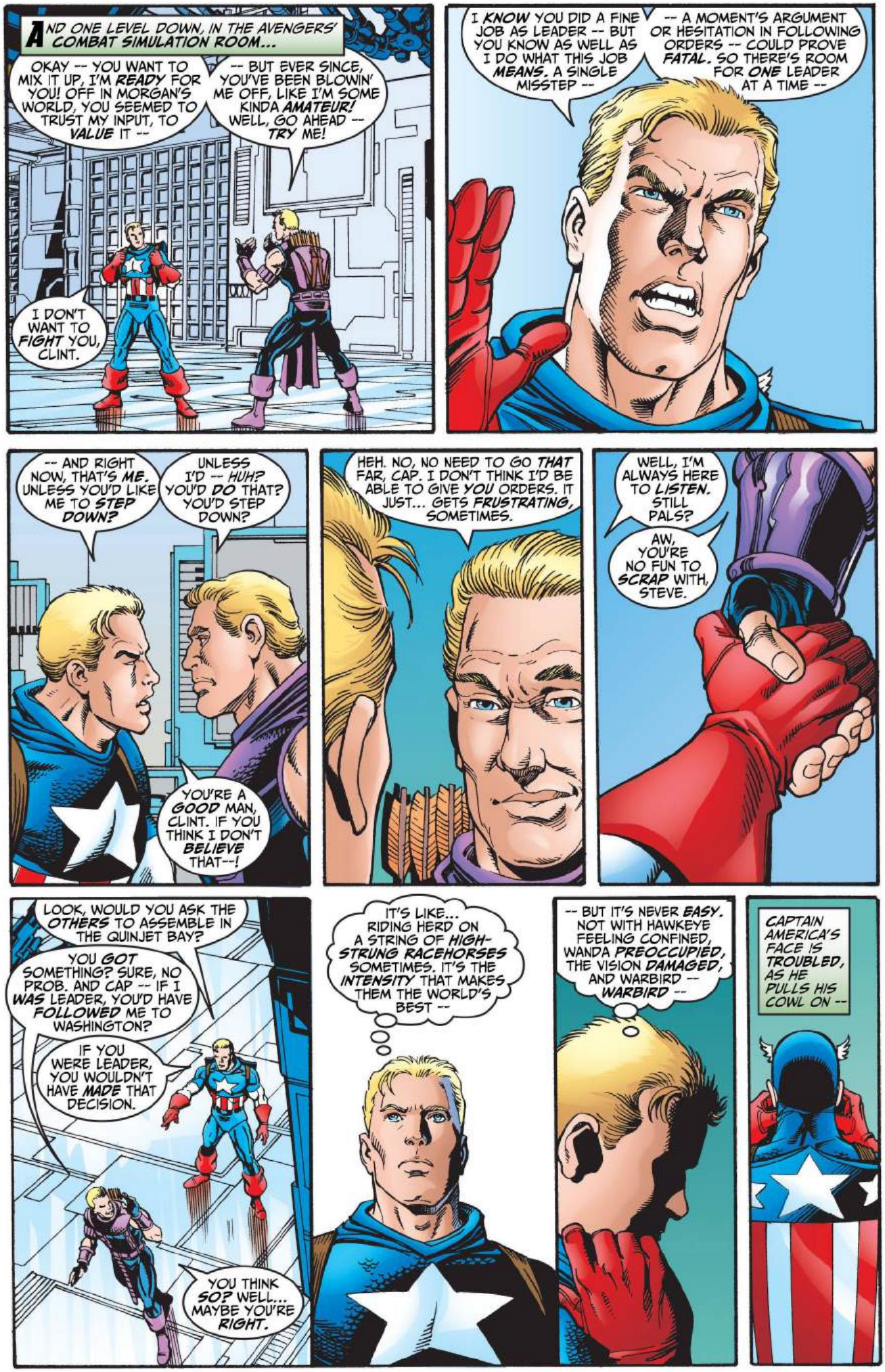
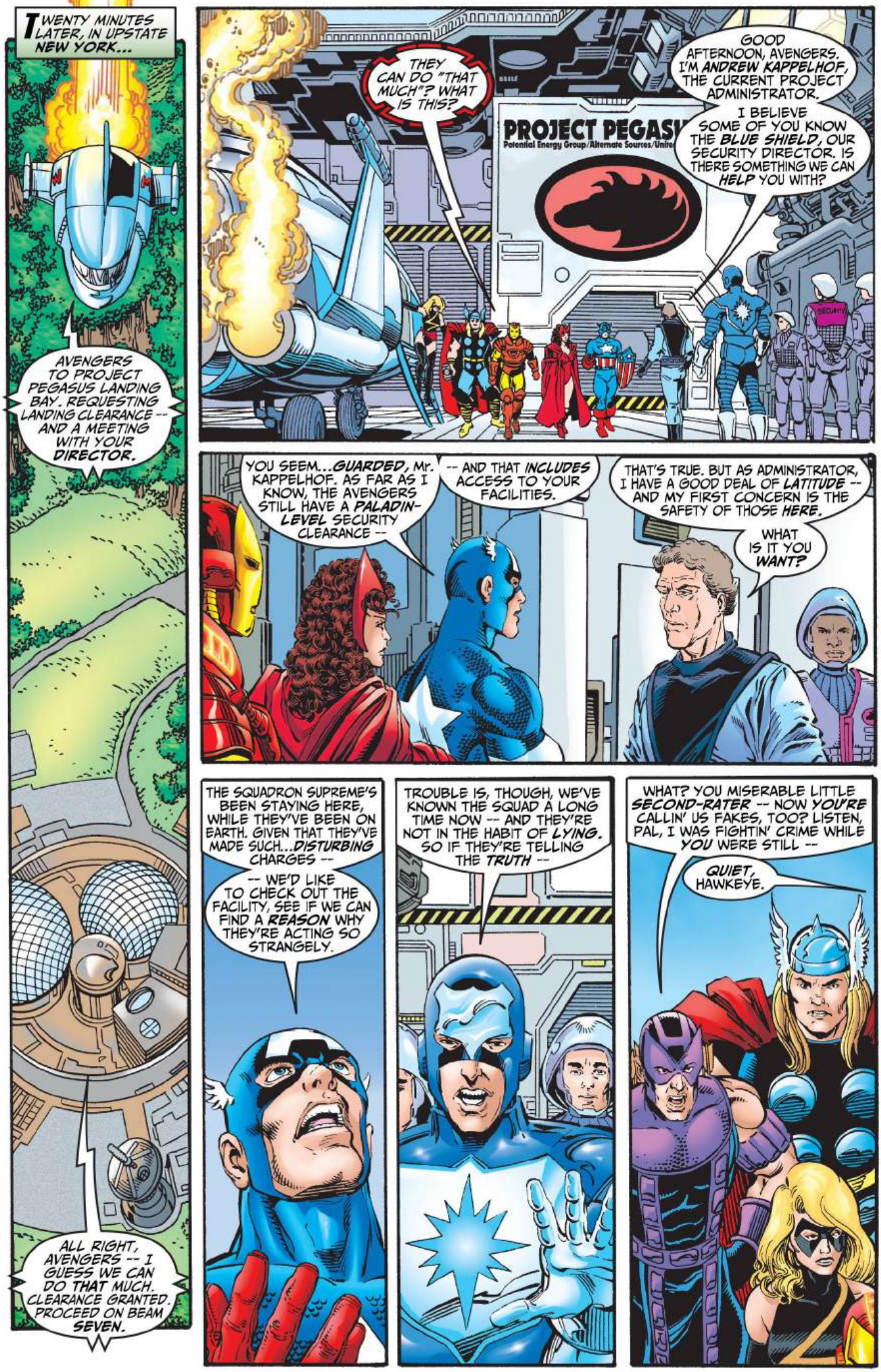

GOOD HEAVENS! THE CARPET--!
PLEASE, THOR -- IT'S A MORRIS --
-- IT'S BEEN IN MY FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS -- -- AND AFTER CAPTAIN AMERICA'S RECENT RAMPAGE THROUGH HERE,* I'M NOT EAGER TO LOSE ANY MORE FAMILY HEIR-LOOMS!
I -- I DO APOLOGIZE, FRIEND IRON MAN. BUT THESE ACCUSATIONS -- THEY BE MORE THAN ANY WARRIOR SHOULD BE MADE TO ENDURE --
-- WASHINGTON TODAY, WHERE HYPERION, LEADER OF THE EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL HEROES KNOWN AS THE SQUADRON SUPREME --
-- REPEATED ACCUSATIONS THAT THE AVENGERS -- EVEN THOSE WHO NEVER VANISHED INTO THE BEING CALLED ONSLAUGHT** -- ARE IMPOSTORS.
IRON MAN, IF I MIGHT SUGGEST -- ALL OF US HERE KNOW YOUR TRUE IDENTITY, BUT WARBIRD DOES NOT, AND SHE IS ONLY --
OH, SHUT UP, VISION. THE MAN CAN MAKE HIS OWN CHOICES!
*CAP #3
**ONSLAUGHT: MARVEL UNIVERSE -- TOM.
THE SQUADRON, WHICH TESTIFIES TODAY BEFORE CONGRESS ON THE MATTER --
LIES! BASE LIES -- AND BASER MEN!
THOR, SSSH! THERE'S NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY YELLING AT THE TELEVISION. BESIDES, HE'S TALKING AGAIN --
-- AND I, FOR ONE, WOULD LIKE TO HEAR IT.
-- NO, WE'RE NOT SURE ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR --
-- BUT WE'RE CONFIDENT THAT WHEN ALL THE EVIDENCE IS WEIGHED, THE TRUTH WILL--
KSSSH

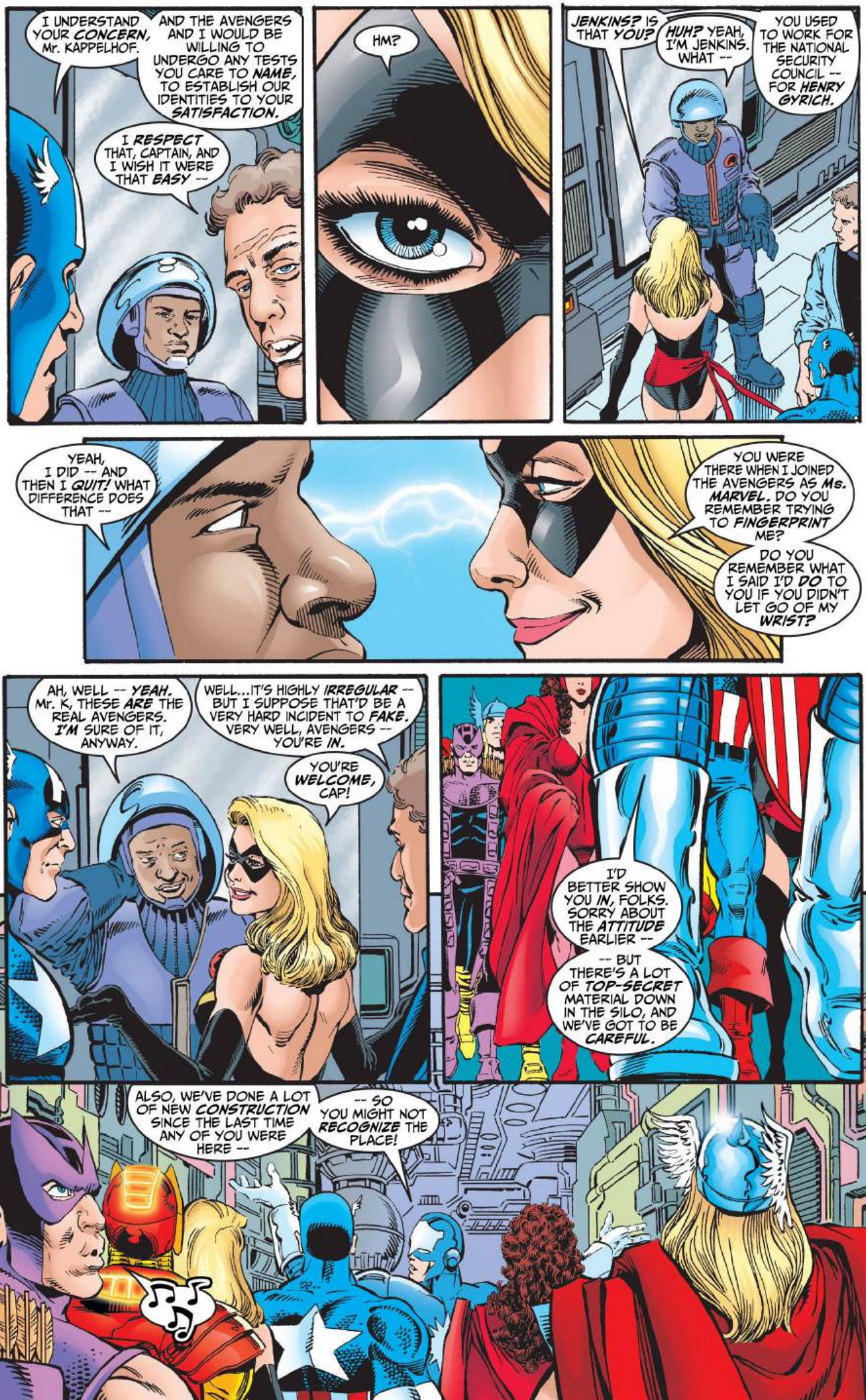

HAWKEYE! WHAT ON EARTH--?
THIS IS RIDICULOUS, CAP! ALL OF IT! WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO TAKE THIS!
SURE, THEY BUSTED UP ONE OF OUR MISSIONS AND CLAIMED WE'RE FAKES* -- BUT THAT'S A LOAD O' BULL, AN' EVERYONE KNOWS IT!
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
METHINKS OUR FIERY-TEMPERED ARCHER HATH A POINT, CAPTAIN. THE AVENGERS HAVE SERVED THIS WORLD LONG AND FAITHFULLY --
-- SO WHY DO WE GET THREATS OF OUR SECURITY CLEARANCE BEING REVOKED -- AGAIN -- UNLESS WE CAN PROVE THE SQUADRON'S LYING?
BUT IT IS AN ENTIRELY LOGICAL RESPONSE, IRON MAN.
EH? VISION--?
CONSIDER: WE VANISHED, APPARENTLY DEAD, AND THEN REAPPEARED. HOW CAN ANYONE BE SURE WE ARE WHO WE SAY WE ARE?
THE WORLD WAS BADLY FRIGHTENED BY THE THREAT OF SKRULL INFILTRATION, AND EARLIER, THE THUNDERBOLTS' IMPOSTURE. CAN WE BLAME THEM?*
INDEED, WHAT IF WE WERE DOPPELGANGERS, CREATED WITH FALSE MEMORIES? HOW WOULD WE EVEN KNOW?
WELL, I KNOW WHO I AM, AT LEAST. SO IF YOU'LL PARDON ME--?
WHAT SHE SAID. I'M ME -- I KNOW THAT, AND THE BIO-SCANS BEAR IT OUT.
SO I SAY WE FLY TO WASHINGTON, SLAP THOSE SQUADRON LOSERS AROUND -- AND MAKE 'EM TELL US WHO PUT 'EM UP TO THIS!
NOT AN OPTION, CLINT. IT ONLY ESCALATES THE PROBLEM.
HEY! A LITTLE RESPECT HERE, MISTER -- I'M NO ROOKIE, WET BEHIND THE EARS, HANGIN' ON YOUR EVERY COMMAND!
I USED TO LEAD AN AVENGERS TEAM -- IN CASE YOU FORGOT!
HAWKEYE -- LET'S TALK PRIVATELY.
*IN THE PAGES OF CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THUNDERBOLTS -- TOM.


AND AS HAWKEYE GRIMLY AGREES, A CORRIDOR AWAY --
SHE SAID SHE KNOWS WHO SHE IS -- BUT IN TRUTH, SHE'S NOT SO SURE. PEOPLE SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD TRUST -- RELATIONSHIPS, FEELINGS --
-- THEY ALL SEEM INSUBSTANTIAL NOW, LIKE FLEETING DREAMS.
EVEN HER POWERS HAVE BEEN ACTING STRANGELY OF LATE, AS IF THEY TOO HAVE CHANGED WITHOUT HER KNOWLEDGE.
AND SHE HAS NO ONE TO SHARE HER WORRIES WITH, NO ONE TO --
-- TALK TO --
OH! I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE --
HEY, NO PROBLEM. C'MON IN, WANDA -- MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
THIS WHOLE IMPOSTOR THING'S GETTING TO ME, AND I THOUGHT A LITTLE NIP OR TWO MIGHT SETTLE MY NERVES.
CARE TO JOIN ME?
AH, NO, CAROL -- I DON'T THINK SO.
SUIT YOURSELF. SO WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU? THE VISION?
AMONG OTHER THINGS. IT'S JUST -- IT'S SO HARD TO SEE HIM ACTING SO COLD, SO RESERVED.
I USED TO KNOW HIM, USED TO KNOW THAT THERE WAS A WARM, CARING MAN UNDER THAT EXTERIOR, BUT NOW --
ICE CREAM
BAVARIAN CHOCOLATE PECAN
NOW YOU DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING UNDERNEATH, HUH?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
UM -- ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE DRINKING THAT MUCH? IT'S ONLY--
BACK OFF, HON. I KNOW MY LIMIT. BESIDES --
-- ONCE YOU GET TO BE MY AGE, YOU'LL REALIZE THAT STUFF GOES TO YOUR HIPS A LOT FASTER THAN THIS!

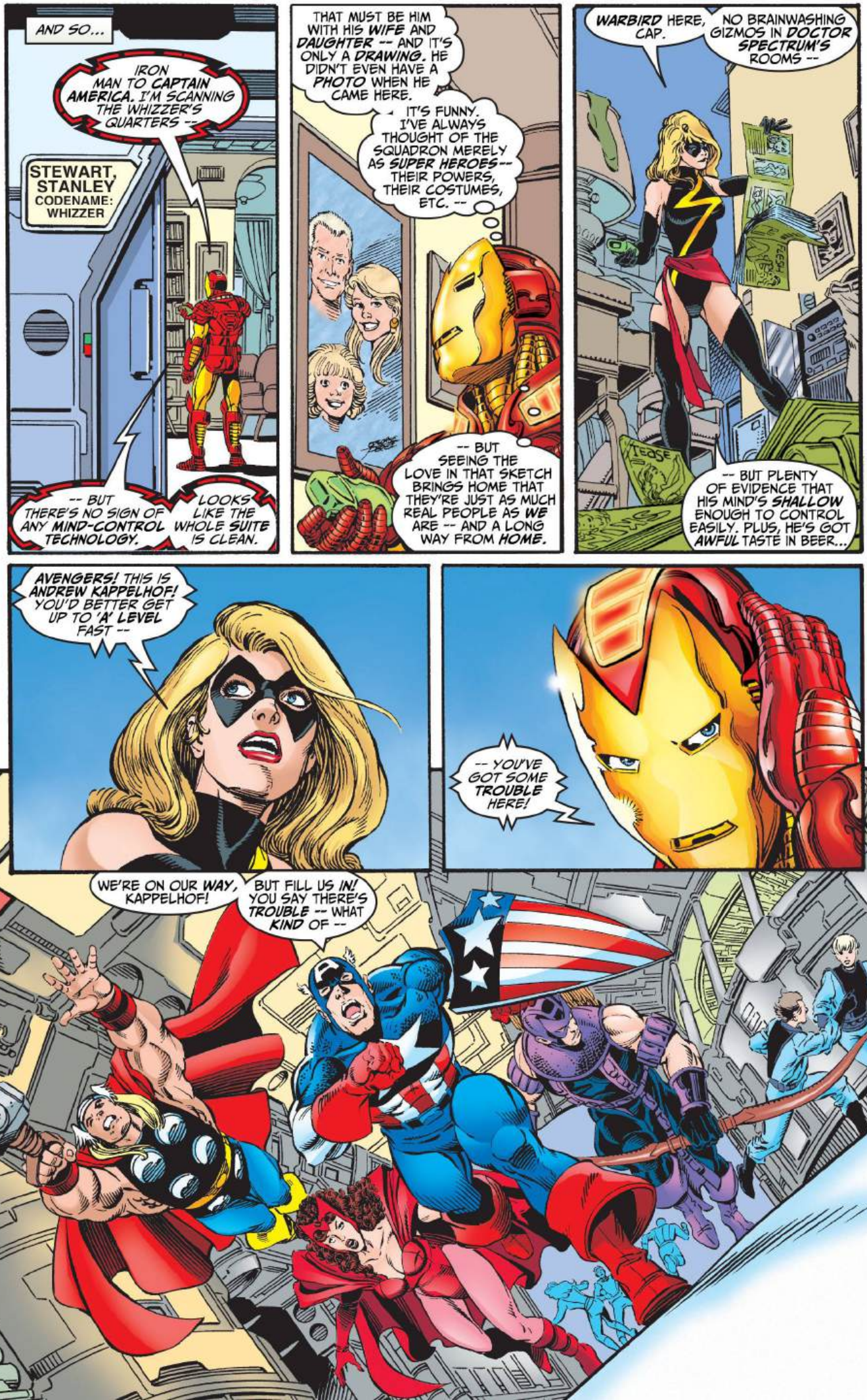

AND ONE LEVEL DOWN, IN THE AVENGERS' COMBAT SIMULATION ROOM...
OKAY -- YOU WANT TO MIX IT UP, I'M READY FOR YOU! OFF IN MORGAN'S WORLD, YOU SEEMED TO TRUST MY INPUT, TO VALUE IT --
-- BUT EVER SINCE, YOU'VE BEEN BLOWIN' ME OFF, LIKE I'M SOME KINDA AMATEUR! WELL, GO AHEAD -- TRY ME!
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU, CLINT.
I KNOW YOU DID A FINE JOB AS LEADER -- BUT YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO WHAT THIS JOB MEANS. A SINGLE MISSTEP --
-- A MOMENT'S ARGUMENT OR HESITATION IN FOLLOWING ORDERS -- COULD PROVE FATAL. SO THERE'S ROOM FOR ONE LEADER AT A TIME --
-- AND RIGHT NOW, THAT'S ME. UNLESS YOU'D LIKE ME TO STEP DOWN?
UNLESS I'D -- HUH? YOU'D DO THAT? YOU'D STEP DOWN?
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CLINT. IF YOU THINK I DON'T BELIEVE THAT--!
HEH. NO, NO NEED TO GO THAT FAR, CAP. I DON'T THINK I'D BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU ORDERS. IT JUST... GETS FRUSTRATING, SOMETIMES.
WELL, I'M ALWAYS HERE TO LISTEN. STILL PALS?
AW, YOU'RE NO FUN TO SCRAP WITH, STEVE.
LOOK, WOULD YOU ASK THE OTHERS TO ASSEMBLE IN THE QUINJET BAY?
YOU GOT SOMETHING? SURE, NO PROB. AND CAP -- IF I WAS LEADER, YOU'D HAVE FOLLOWED ME TO WASHINGTON?
IF YOU WERE LEADER, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MADE THAT DECISION.
YOU THINK SO? WELL... MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT'S LIKE... RIDING HERD ON A STRING OF HIGH-STRUNG RACEHORSES SOMETIMES. IT'S THE INTENSITY THAT MAKES THEM THE WORLD'S BEST --
-- BUT IT'S NEVER EASY. NOT WITH HAWKEYE FEELING CONFINED, WANDA PREOCCUPIED, THE VISION DAMAGED, AND WARBIRD -- WARBIRD --
CAPTAIN AMERICA'S FACE IS TROUBLED, AS HE PULLS HIS COWL ON --

-- BUT MINUTES LATER --
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE --
-- WE'RE OFF!
WE'RE HEADED FOR PROJECT PEGASUS, HAWKEYE. YOU KNOW THE WAY?
IT'S IN THE NAV CHARTS -- I'LL HAVE NO PROBLEM. AND... YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S A BETTER IDEA.
THANKS. AND NOW THAT WE'VE GOT A FEW MINUTES --
-- WARBIRD, I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS SOMETHING.
WHEN WE FOUGHT THE SQUADRON BEFORE,* I ORDERED YOU TO POWER UP TO BINARY LEVEL -- TO USE YOUR STAR-CHANNELING ABILITIES.
YOU DIDN'T -- EVEN THOUGH WE BADLY NEEDED THAT POWER. WHY NOT?
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
Oh, BOY -- HERE WE GO.
SAVE ME FROM MEN WHO DON'T THINK WOMEN SHOULD BE ABLE TO THINK INDEPENDENTLY!
Huh --?
LOOK, CAP -- THEY'RE MY POWERS, AND I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF HOW BEST TO USE THEM.
YOU JUST BUTT OUT, AND I'LL DO MY JOB -- WITHOUT INTERFERENCE! GOT IT?
NOW SEE HERE --
NO, CAP, DON'T. IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA TO PRESS YOUR POINT RIGHT NOW.
BUT --
I'VE GOT AN IDEA WHAT'S BOTHERING HER, AND I'LL TALK TO HER ABOUT IT... BUT LATER. OKAY?
...
ALL RIGHT. FOR NOW.


TWENTY MINUTES LATER, IN UPSTATE NEW YORK...
AVENGERS TO PROJECT PEGASUS LANDING BAY. REQUESTING LANDING CLEARANCE -- AND A MEETING WITH YOUR DIRECTOR.
ALL RIGHT, AVENGERS -- I GUESS WE CAN DO THAT MUCH. CLEARANCE GRANTED. PROCEED ON BEAM SEVEN.
THEY CAN DO "THAT MUCH"? WHAT IS THIS?
PROJECT PEGASU
Potential Energy Group/Alternate Sources/Unlim
GOOD AFTERNOON, AVENGERS. I'M ANDREW KAPPELHOF, THE CURRENT PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR.
I BELIEVE SOME OF YOU KNOW THE BLUE SHIELD, OUR SECURITY DIRECTOR. IS THERE SOMETHING WE CAN HELP YOU WITH?
SECURITY
YOU SEEM...GUARDED, Mr. KAPPELHOF. AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE AVENGERS STILL HAVE A PALADIN-LEVEL SECURITY CLEARANCE --
-- AND THAT INCLUDES ACCESS TO YOUR FACILITIES.
THAT'S TRUE. BUT AS ADMINISTRATOR, I HAVE A GOOD DEAL OF LATITUDE -- AND MY FIRST CONCERN IS THE SAFETY OF THOSE HERE.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
THE SQUADRON SUPREME'S BEEN STAYING HERE, WHILE THEY'VE BEEN ON EARTH. GIVEN THAT THEY'VE MADE SUCH...DISTURBING CHARGES --
-- WE'D LIKE TO CHECK OUT THE FACILITY, SEE IF WE CAN FIND A REASON WHY THEY'RE ACTING SO STRANGELY.
TROUBLE IS, THOUGH, WE'VE KNOWN THE SQUAD A LONG TIME NOW -- AND THEY'RE NOT IN THE HABIT OF LYING. SO IF THEY'RE TELLING THE TRUTH --
WHAT? YOU MISERABLE LITTLE SECOND-RATER -- NOW YOU'RE CALLIN' US FAKES, TOO? LISTEN, PAL, I WAS FIGHTIN' CRIME WHILE YOU WERE STILL --
QUIET, HAWKEYE.

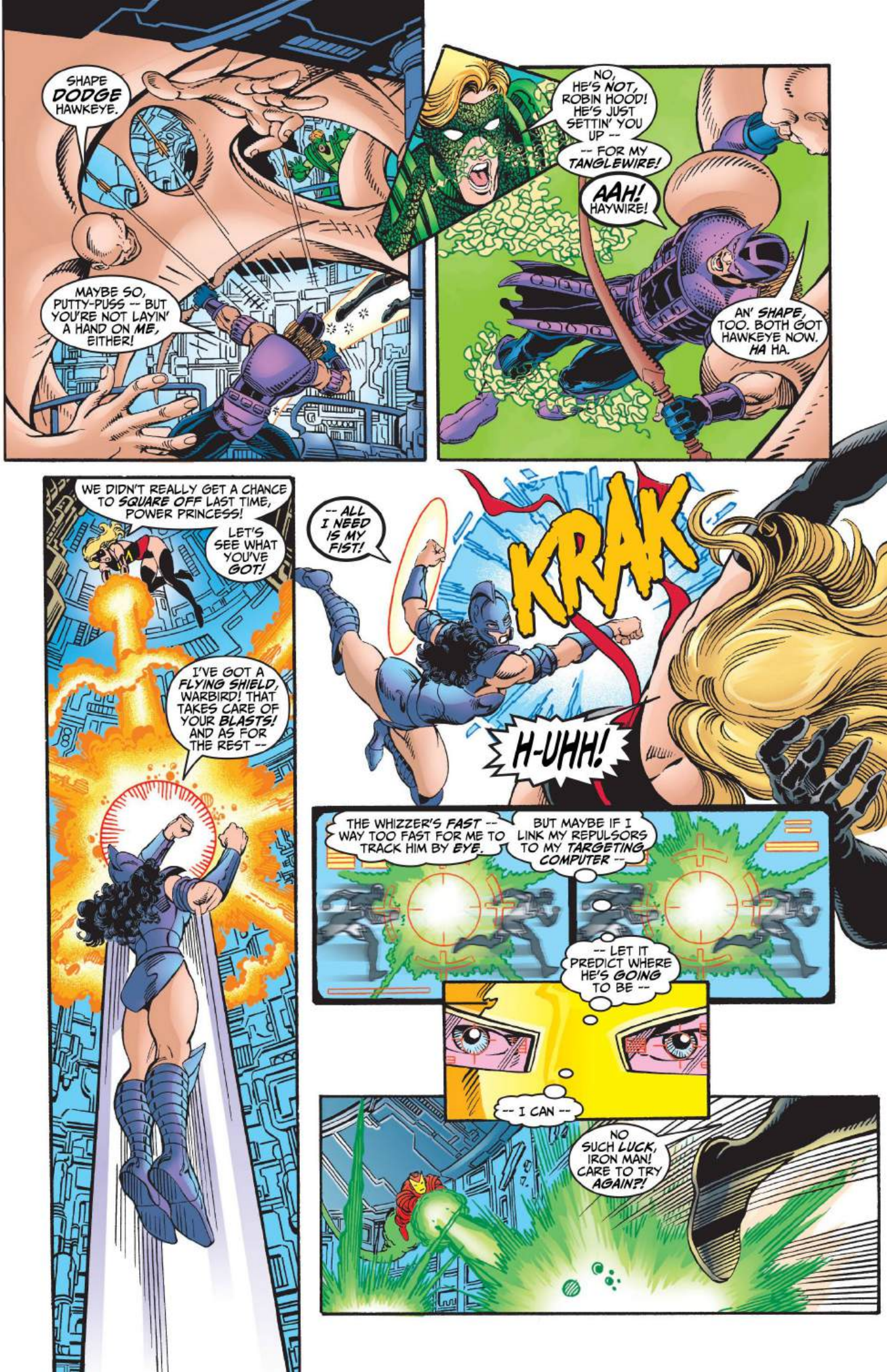

I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, Mr. KAPPELHOF.
AND THE AVENGERS AND I WOULD BE WILLING TO UNDERGO ANY TESTS YOU CARE TO NAME, TO ESTABLISH OUR IDENTITIES TO YOUR SATISFACTION.
I RESPECT THAT, CAPTAIN, AND I WISH IT WERE THAT EASY --
HM?
JENKINS? IS THAT YOU?
HUH? YEAH, I'M JENKINS. WHAT --
YOU USED TO WORK FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL -- FOR HENRY GYRICH.
YEAH, I DID -- AND THEN I QUIT! WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THAT --
YOU WERE THERE WHEN I JOINED THE AVENGERS AS Ms. MARVEL. DO YOU REMEMBER TRYING TO FINGERPRINT ME?
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I SAID I'D DO TO YOU IF YOU DIDN'T LET GO OF MY WRIST?
AH, WELL -- YEAH. Mr. K, THESE ARE THE REAL AVENGERS. I'M SURE OF IT, ANYWAY.
WELL...IT'S HIGHLY IRREGULAR -- BUT I SUPPOSE THAT'D BE A VERY HARD INCIDENT TO FAKE. VERY WELL, AVENGERS -- YOU'RE IN.
YOU'RE WELCOME, CAP!
I'D BETTER SHOW YOU IN, FOLKS. SORRY ABOUT THE ATTITUDE EARLIER --
-- BUT THERE'S A LOT OF TOP-SECRET MATERIAL DOWN IN THE SILO, AND WE'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL.
ALSO, WE'VE DONE A LOT OF NEW CONSTRUCTION SINCE THE LAST TIME ANY OF YOU WERE HERE --
-- SO YOU MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE THE PLACE!

AS YOU KNOW, WE DO RESEARCH INTO ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES --
--SOLAR, THERMAL, MAGNETO-GRAVITIC AND MORE.
BUT WE'VE ALSO TAKEN ON OTHER RESEARCH -- ESPECIALLY SINCE WE SHUT DOWN OUR ACTIVE PARAHUMAN STUDIES.
TAKE DOCTOR RIVERA HERE --
-- HE'S CATALOGING ALL PARAHUMANS KNOWN TO EXIST --
-- ENABLING US TO CROSS-REFERENCE BY POWERS, HISTORY, MODUS OPERANDI AND MORE.
AND I DOUBT I'LL EVER BE FINISHED -- BUT WE'RE MAKING REAL STRIDES.
ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO SEE, AVENGERS?
HOW ABOUT CRIMINALS KNOWN TO CONTROL OR INFLUENCE MINDS?
OOH, NICE ONE! AND NO SOONER ASKED --
-- THAN ANSWERED!
SOME OF THESE ARE DEAD, OF COURSE, BUT GIVEN THE NUMBER OF RESURRECTIONS YOU FOLKS DEAL WITH, I THINK IT'S SAFER TO LEAVE 'EM IN.
AND THIS IS ONLY A PARTIAL LIST -- BUT I CAN SCROLL THROUGH OTHERS, IF YOU'D LIKE. OR IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE SEARCH PARAMETERS...
BARON ZEMO
CORRUPTOR
DR. FAUSTUS
CONTROLLER
LORELEI
BEAUTIFUL DREAMER
MAXIMUS
MESMERO
MR. DOLL
PHOBIUS
OVERMIND
PUPPET MASTER
PURPLE MAN
MENTALLO
RINGMASTER
VOICE OF
MASTERMIND
THANKS, BUT I... THINK WE'D BETTER TRY OTHER AVENUES FIRST. WE DON'T HAVE A WHOLE LOT OF TIME --
-- AND THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD CHECK THIS ENTIRE LIST BEFORE OUR CLEARANCE IS REVOKED.


AND SO...
IRON MAN TO CAPTAIN AMERICA. I'M SCANNING THE WHIZZER'S QUARTERS --
STEWART, STANLEY CODENAME: WHIZZER
-- BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF ANY MIND-CONTROL TECHNOLOGY.
LOOKS LIKE THE WHOLE SUITE IS CLEAN.
THAT MUST BE HIM WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER -- AND IT'S ONLY A DRAWING. HE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A PHOTO WHEN HE CAME HERE.
IT'S FUNNY. I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF THE SQUADRON MERELY AS SUPER HEROES-- THEIR POWERS, THEIR COSTUMES, ETC. --
-- BUT SEEING THE LOVE IN THAT SKETCH BRINGS HOME THAT THEY'RE JUST AS MUCH REAL PEOPLE AS WE ARE -- AND A LONG WAY FROM HOME.
WARBIRD HERE, CAP.
NO BRAINWASHING GIZMOS IN DOCTOR SPECTRUM'S ROOMS --
-- BUT PLENTY OF EVIDENCE THAT HIS MIND'S SHALLOW ENOUGH TO CONTROL EASILY. PLUS, HE'S GOT AWFUL TASTE IN BEER...
AVENGERS! THIS IS ANDREW KAPPELHOF! YOU'D BETTER GET UP TO 'A' LEVEL FAST --
-- YOU'VE GOT SOME TROUBLE HERE!
WE'RE ON OUR WAY, KAPPELHOF!
BUT FILL US IN! YOU SAY THERE'S TROUBLE -- WHAT KIND OF --

-- Oh.
SO, IMPOSTORS! YOU NOT ONLY SULLY THE NAME OF YOUR WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES -- BUT YOU INVADE OUR PRIVACY AS WELL --
-- AND TRY TO PLANT GOD KNOWS WHAT IN OUR QUARTERS!
IT'S A GOOD THING SOME OF OUR FRIENDS HERE ALERTED US DOWN IN WASHINGTON! YOU CREEPS NEED ANOTHER LESSON IN MANNERS --
-- AND THE SQUADRON SUPREME'S JUST THE TEAM TO GIVE IT TO YOU!

CAP, THEY SOUND SO SERIOUS -- AS IF THEY REALLY BELIEVE WHAT THEY'RE SAYING!
I KNOW, WANDA. BUT LET'S WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER. RIGHT NOW -- WE COULD USE WONDER MAN, IF YOU CAN PULL THAT TRICK AGAIN.
A SINGLE, SIMPLE HEX --
ZNAK
-- AND --
IT... WAS EASIER, THIS TIME. BUT I DON'T LIKE THIS. SIMON'S DEAD -- ONLY HE'S NOT SOMEHOW --
-- AND IT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT FOR ME TO CONJURE HIM UP WITH MY HEX POWERS, LIKE HE'S SOME KIND OF ENSLAVED GENIE --!
HIYA, WANDA, WHAT'S --
"-- Oh, THIS AGAIN?"
SQUADRON -- ATTACK! LET'S SHOW THESE ERSATZ AVENGERS ONCE AND FOR ALL --
-- THAT NO ONE'S A MATCH FOR THE SQUADRON SUPREME!
YOU MAY TRY, HYPERION. BUT KNOW THIS.
THY LIES HAVE SET A GOD'S BLOOD TO BOILING WITH RAGE --
-- AND I SHALL NOT COUNTENANCE ANY MORE OF THEM!
UHH!
SPAM
AH-AH!
NICE SHOT ON HYPE THERE, BLONDIE -- BUT YOU HAD TO LET LOOSE OF YOUR HAMMER TO DO IT! AND DOCTOR SPECTRUM --
-- ISN'T LETTING YOU HAVE IT BACK!
Eh --?


SHAPE DODGE HAWKEYE.
MAYBE SO, PUTTY-PUSS -- BUT YOU'RE NOT LAYIN' A HAND ON ME, EITHER!
NO, HE'S NOT, ROBIN HOOD! HE'S JUST SETTIN' YOU UP --
-- FOR MY TANGLEWIRE!
AAH! HAYWIRE!
AN' SHAPE, TOO. BOTH GOT HAWKEYE NOW. HA HA.
WE DIDN'T REALLY GET A CHANCE TO SQUARE OFF LAST TIME, POWER PRINCESS!
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT!
I'VE GOT A FLYING SHIELD, WARBIRD! THAT TAKES CARE OF YOUR BLASTS! AND AS FOR THE REST --
-- ALL I NEED IS MY FIST!
KRAK
H-UHH!
THE WHIZZER'S FAST -- WAY TOO FAST FOR ME TO TRACK HIM BY EYE.
BUT MAYBE IF I LINK MY REPULSORS TO MY TARGETING COMPUTER --
-- LET IT PREDICT WHERE HE'S GOING TO BE --
-- I CAN --
NO SUCH LUCK, IRON MAN! CARE TO TRY AGAIN?!

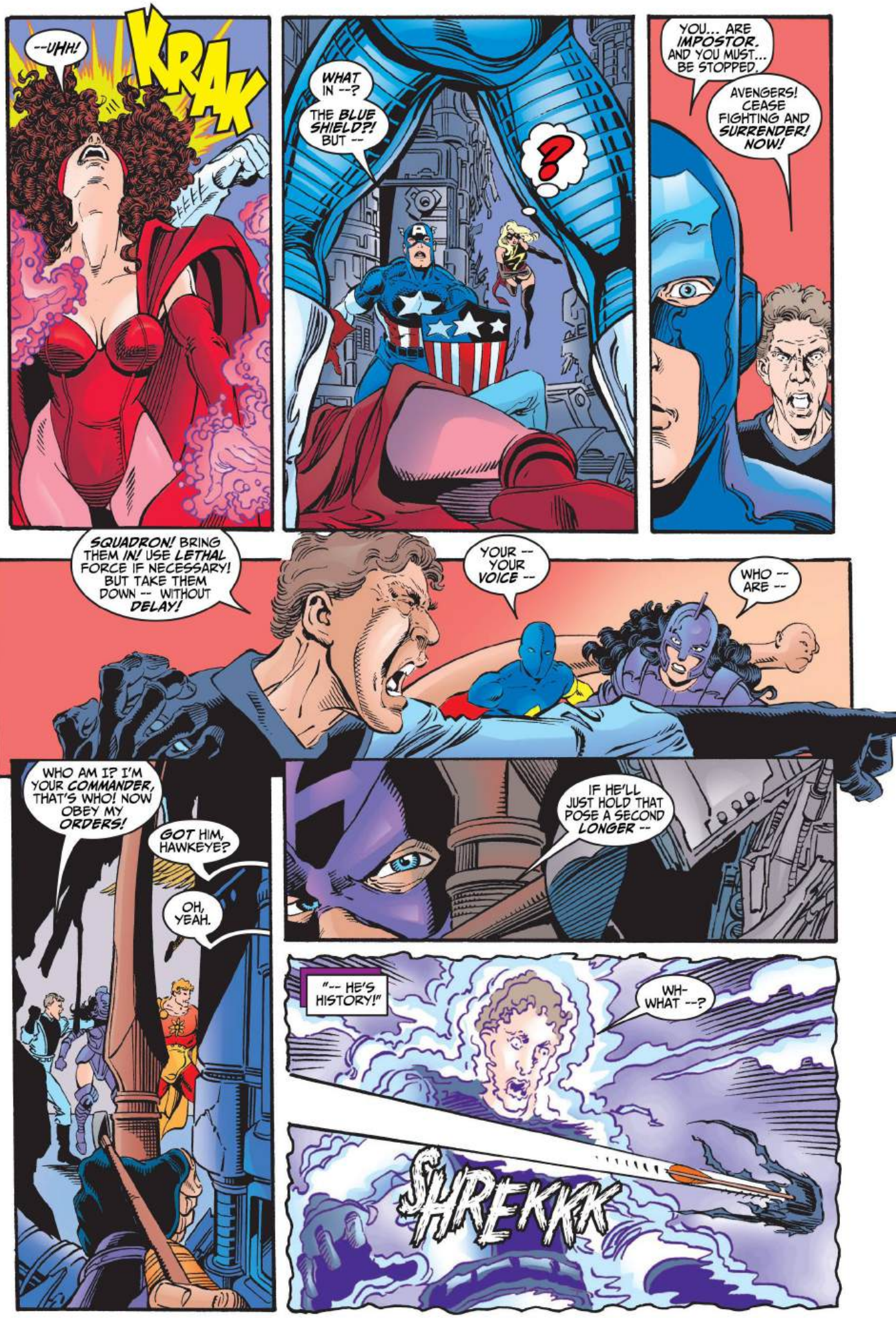
YOU'RE MORE FORMIDABLE THAN YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO BE, SCARLET WITCH! BUT I'VE HAD MORE EXPERIENCE IN MAGIC -- MORE TRAINING --
-- AND THAT'LL INEVITABLY MAKE ME THE VICTOR!
IT ONLY PUTS THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOR, MOONGLOW! AND I'VE GOT A HABIT OF BEATING THE ODDS!
I DON'T GET IT -- MY SKILLS ARE SO RUSTY THAT I'M NOT EVEN TRYING TO USE MAGIC! JUST MY MUTANT HEX ABILITIES! SO -- WHAT'S GOING ON?!
YOU HAVE TO CONCENTRATE TO KEEP THESE ENERGY-CONSTRUCTS UP, SPECTRUM -- ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
SO IF I KEEP POUNDING, I'LL EITHER BREAK THROUGH -- OR YOU'LL HAVE TO LET UP ON THOR'S HAMMER, AND HE'LL GET IT BACK!
P-POUND AWAY ALL YOU W-WANT, WONDER MAN! I CAN'T KEEP THIS UP FOREVER --
-- BUT THEN, I DON'T HAVE TO! ANY M-MINUTE NOW --
"-- THOR'S NOT GONNA BE A FACTOR ANY MORE!"
GHUHH!
NOT SO COCKY NOW -- ARE YOU, "THOR"?
WITHOUT THAT HAMMER, YOU CAN'T FLY -- AND I CAN! SO IT'S HARD FOR YOU TO REACH ME, BUT I CAN REACH YOU -- LIKE THIS!

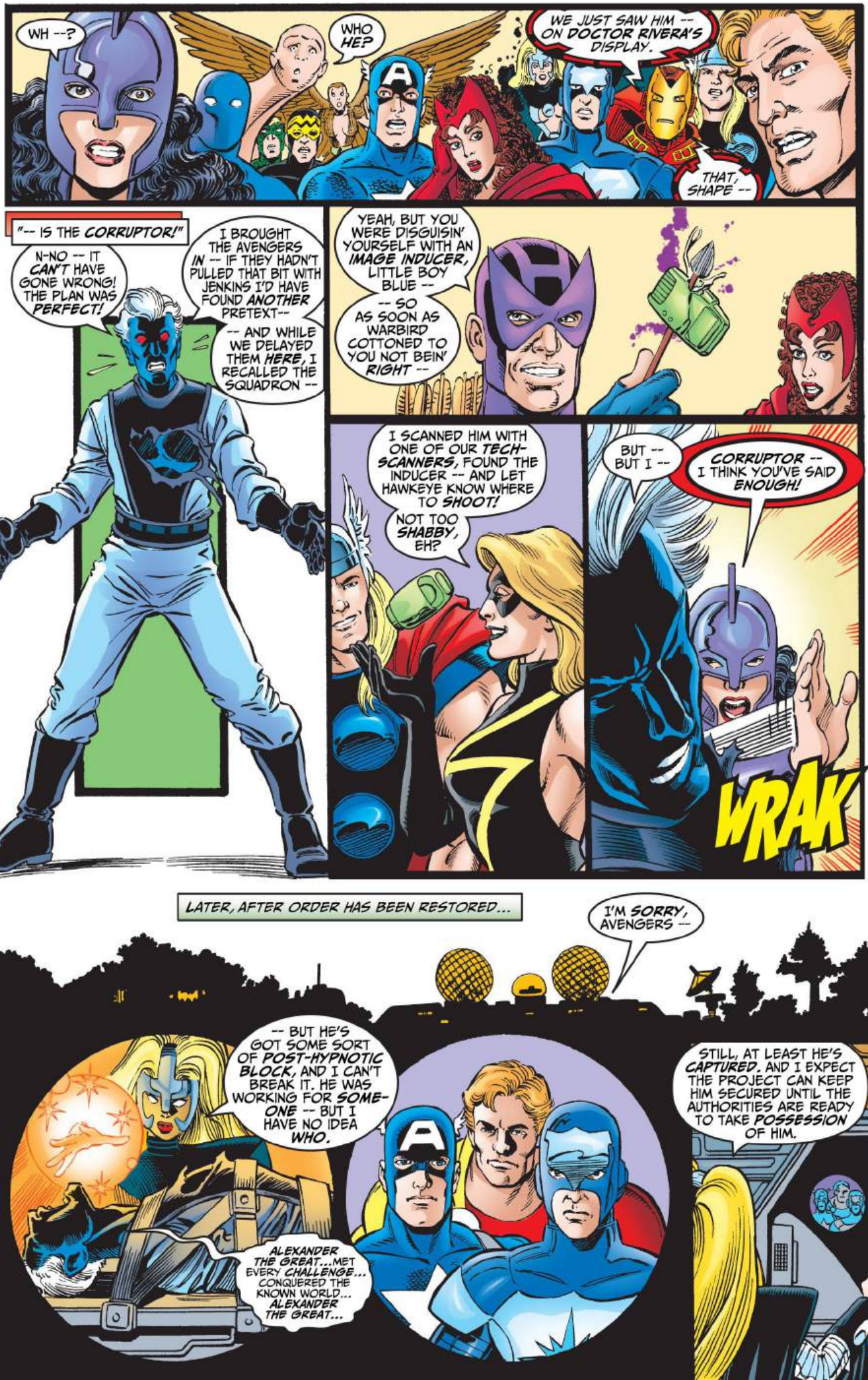
SO WHAT'S THE DEAL, FLAG-BOY?
HOW COME I'M ALWAYS FIGHTING YOU THESE DAYS?
USED TO BE, I'D FIGHT ONE OF THE GIRLS ON YOUR TEAM -- BUT YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER THAT, SINCE YOU'RE A FAKE!
Oh, I REMEMBER, SKYLARK.
IT'S JUST THE LUCK OF THE DRAW, I SUPPOSE. MY OPPOSITE NUMBER ON THE SQUADRON USED TO BE NIGHTHAWK -- BUT HE PASSED AWAY!
STILL, IT'S NOT A TERRIBLY EVEN BATTLE! WITHOUT MY OLD SHIELD, WHICH I COULD THROW -- I'M VULNERABLE TO DISTANCE ATTACKS!
AND WITH HER SONIC POWER -- Eh?!
WARBIRD'S STILL NOT USING HER BINARY POWERS -- AND SHE'S SERIOUSLY OUTMATCHED!
THEY SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN SOMEONE ELSE TO DOUBLE FOR Ms. MARVEL, WARBIRD! NOT ONLY DIDN'T YOU GET THE NAME RIGHT --
-- BUT Ms. MARVEL HAD A STERLING REPUTATION, AND THE WAY YOU'RE FIGHTING, YOU'RE NOT EVEN COMING CLOSE!
SHE'S RIGHT. WARBIRD LOOKS A LITTLE SHAKY --
HEY! CAP! FORGET TO WATCH YOUR BACK?
ACTUALLY, SKYLARK --
-- I WAS HOPING YOU'D TRY SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
IT GIVES ME THE CHANCE --

"-- TO DO THIS!"
HRNH!
WHA- WHAT?!
I FIGHT MY OWN BATTLES, CAP! I DON'T NEED --
THIS IS A TEAM, WARBIRD -- WE HELP EACH OTHER!
YOU'RE IN THE CLEAR -- SO HELP SOMEONE ELSE!
UHH!
FINE!
BUT FROM NOW ON, BUTT OUT OF MY FIGHTS!
BELOW...
STOP WRIGGLING, HAWKEYE. SHAPE BEAT YOU. YOU NOT TICKLE HIM AND MAKE HIM LET YOU GO -- SHAPE LEARNED THAT TRICK.
I'M NOT -- BEATEN -- YET --
YES! YOU BEATEN! SHAPE BEAT YOU! GIVE UP!
NOT -- IF I CAN REACH --
-- AH! GOT IT!
WHAT THAT?
THAT, MY DEAR SHAPE, IS WHAT I CALL --
AAAA!
SHAPE BLIND!
-- A FLARE ARROW!

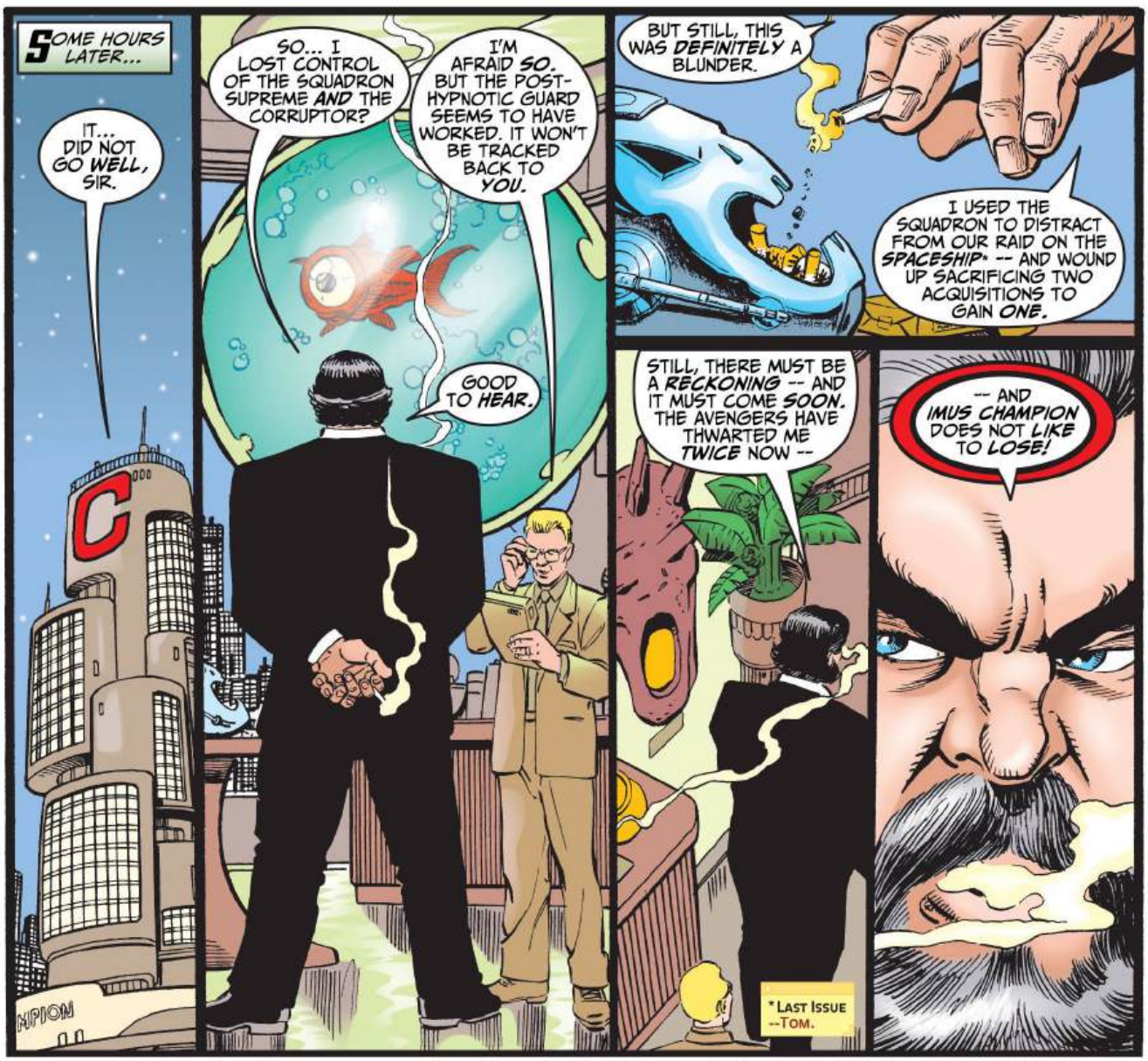
AND SEVERAL LEVELS DOWN THE TRANSIT CORRIDOR KNOWN AS THE LOOP...
NOT AS EASY TO GET AWAY AS YOU THOUGHT, WHIZZER -- IS IT? OUTSIDE, I COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH YOU --
-- BUT IN THESE CLOSE QUARTERS, YOU CAN'T BUILD UP TO FULL SPEED!
OH, I'M NOT RUNNING AWAY, IRON MAN! I'M JUST WAITING UNTIL YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH MOMENTUM!
SEE, BETWEEN YOUR JETS AND YOUR COMPUTERS, YOU'RE DOING FINE FOR SPEED --
CHOOM
--BUT AT THIS VELOCITY, I'M BETTING YOU STEER LIKE A ROCK!
MEANWHILE...
WHAT IN--?
-- I'LL JUST USE YOU TO HELP HIM AGAINST HYPERION!
HUH? OH, NO! HYPERION --
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE RIGHT, SPECTRUM! I CAN'T BREAK THROUGH TO YOU BEFORE THOR'S HAD IT --
-- SO INSTEAD OF TRYING TO GET HIS HAMMER BACK --
-LOOK OOUUT!
HUHH!
AH, MY THANKS, WONDER MAN.

AND NOW, VILLAIN --
THIS IS INSANE! THERE'S NO WAY YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT THIS LONG AGAINST ME!
DON'T I KNOW IT!
BUT SOMEHOW, MY POWER'S PROTECTING ME! NOT JUST DEFLECTING HER MAGIC -- BUT ABSORBING IT!
AND THAT'S NOT ALL --
I CAN -- TOUCH IT, SOMEHOW -- LISTEN TO IT! AND THERE'S -- THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG! WITH MOONGLOW -- AND THE WHOLE SQUADRON!
THE YOUNG MUTANT CONCENTRATES --
--EXPANDING HER HEX TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE SQUADRON -- AND --
WH-WHAT --?
THIS --
HUH?
-- GOING --
-- SO --
WHAT'S --
HOW --
-- WHERE --
I'M DOING IT! WHATEVER'S WRONG WITH THEM -- I CAN REACH IT! I CAN FIX IT! THEY'RE COMING OUT OF IT!
I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I'M DOING --


--UHH!
KRAK
WHAT IN --?
THE BLUE SHIELD?! BUT --
?
YOU... ARE IMPOSTOR. AND YOU MUST... BE STOPPED.
AVENGERS! CEASE FIGHTING AND SURRENDER! NOW!
SQUADRON! BRING THEM IN! USE LETHAL FORCE IF NECESSARY! BUT TAKE THEM DOWN -- WITHOUT DELAY!
YOUR -- YOUR VOICE --
WHO -- ARE --
WHO AM I? I'M YOUR COMMANDER, THAT'S WHO! NOW OBEY MY ORDERS!
GOT HIM, HAWKEYE?
OH, YEAH.
IF HE'LL JUST HOLD THAT POSE A SECOND LONGER --
"-- HE'S HISTORY!"
WH- WHAT --?
SHREKKK


WH --?
WHO HE?
WE JUST SAW HIM -- ON DOCTOR RIVERA'S DISPLAY.
THAT, SHAPE --
"-- IS THE CORRUPTOR!"
N-NO -- IT CAN'T HAVE GONE WRONG! THE PLAN WAS PERFECT!
I BROUGHT THE AVENGERS IN -- IF THEY HADN'T PULLED THAT BIT WITH JENKINS I'D HAVE FOUND ANOTHER PRETEXT--
-- AND WHILE WE DELAYED THEM HERE, I RECALLED THE SQUADRON --
YEAH, BUT YOU WERE DISGUISIN' YOURSELF WITH AN IMAGE INDUCER, LITTLE BOY BLUE --
-- SO AS SOON AS WARBIRD COTTONED TO YOU NOT BEIN' RIGHT --
I SCANNED HIM WITH ONE OF OUR TECH-SCANNERS, FOUND THE INDUCER -- AND LET HAWKEYE KNOW WHERE TO SHOOT!
NOT TOO SHABBY, EH?
BUT -- BUT I --
CORRUPTOR -- I THINK YOU'VE SAID ENOUGH!
WRAK
LATER, AFTER ORDER HAS BEEN RESTORED...
I'M SORRY, AVENGERS --
-- BUT HE'S GOT SOME SORT OF POST-HYPNOTIC BLOCK, AND I CAN'T BREAK IT. HE WAS WORKING FOR SOME-ONE -- BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHO.
ALEXANDER THE GREAT...MET EVERY CHALLENGE... CONQUERED THE KNOWN WORLD... ALEXANDER THE GREAT...
STILL, AT LEAST HE'S CAPTURED. AND I EXPECT THE PROJECT CAN KEEP HIM SECURED UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES ARE READY TO TAKE POSSESSION OF HIM.

BLUE MAN ANGRY.
SO THAT'S IT, I SUPPOSE.
WE'LL GO STRAIGHTEN THINGS OUT IN WASHINGTON, AND YOU CAN GO BACK TO BEING THE WORLD'S FAIR-HAIRED BOYS --
-- WHILE WE GO BACK TO LIVING IN OUR HOLE IN THE GROUND.
A NICE DEAL ALL AROUND... FOR YOU, ANYWAY.
I'M GOING TO WRITE THAT OFF TO THE LAST VESTIGES OF THE CORRUPTOR'S EFFECT, HYPERION -- BECAUSE OTHERWISE, YOU'D BE WAY OUT OF LINE.
OH? SO WHO GETS TO GO HOME HERE?
WE DO. AND I WISH YOU COULD TOO. BUT REMEMBER -- THIS STARTED BECAUSE YOU LET YOURSELVES GET MIND-CONTROLLED--
-- FOR WHAT -- THE THIRD TIME? THE FOURTH?
I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN MY TEAM GETS SMEARED, MISTER -- ESPECIALLY NOT AS A RESULT OF SOMEONE ELSE'S CARELESSNESS.
CARELESSNESS? WHY, YOU --!
WELL, WELL. SO THE BOY SCOUT HAS A BITE.
HERE -- THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE THIS. MAYBE IT'LL REMIND YOU NEXT TIME THAT US PEONS CAN THINK FOR OUR-SELVES.
I'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST INITIATIVE, WARBIRD -- OR INDEPENDENT THOUGHT. WHAT I DON'T LIKE IS NOT KNOWING MY TEAM'S CAPABILITIES.
IF THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR POWERS THAT I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT--
SO THAT'S IT, Eh? YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR ANY EXCUSE YOU CAN FIND TO GET ME OFF THIS TEAM -- AND NOW YOU THINK YOU'VE FOUND IT!
WELL, I'M WISE TO YOU, CAPTAIN --
H-Huh?
-- AND IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK, YOU HEAR? IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK!



IMUS WHO? WELL, IF YOU'VE GOT LONG MEMORIES, YOU'LL REMEMBER HIM -- AND IF YOU DON'T, THE ANSWERS ARE IN

AVENGERS/SQUADRON SUPREME THIS JULY!

AND FOR MORE ON WARBIRD, DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S MINI-EPIC

LIVE KREE OR DIE!

IT STARTS IN IRON MAN #7 AND RUNS THROUGH CAPTAIN AMERICA #8 AND QUICKSILVER #10 BEFORE WRAPPING UP BACK HERE IN AVENGERS #7!

(AND IF YOU DON'T READ THOSE OTHER BOOKS, DON'T FRET -- WE'LL FILL YA IN!)

MARVEL COMICS
LIVE KREE OR DIE! 4 OF 4
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
the AVENGERS
AUG
#7
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BUSIEK • PÉREZ • VEY
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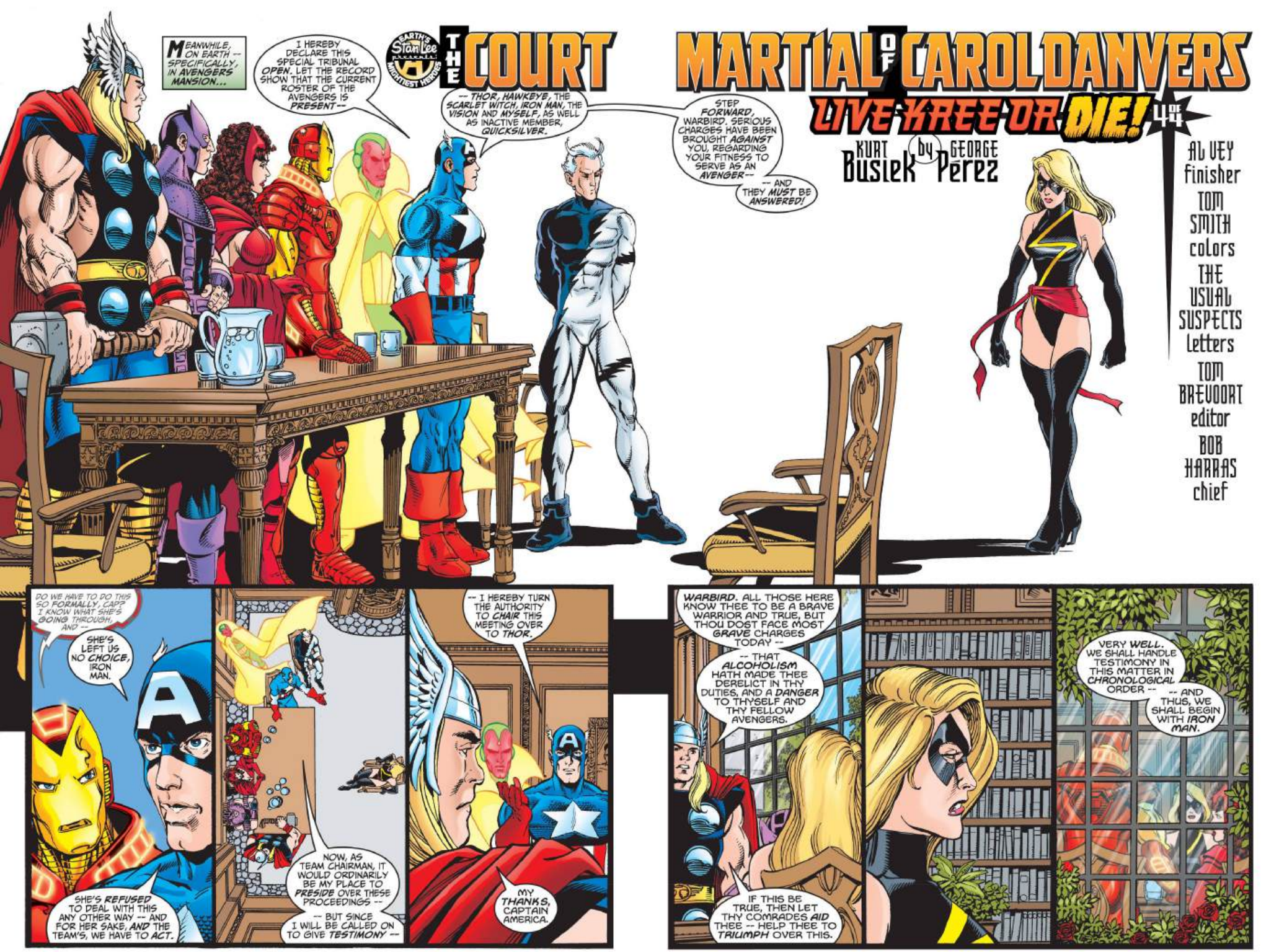
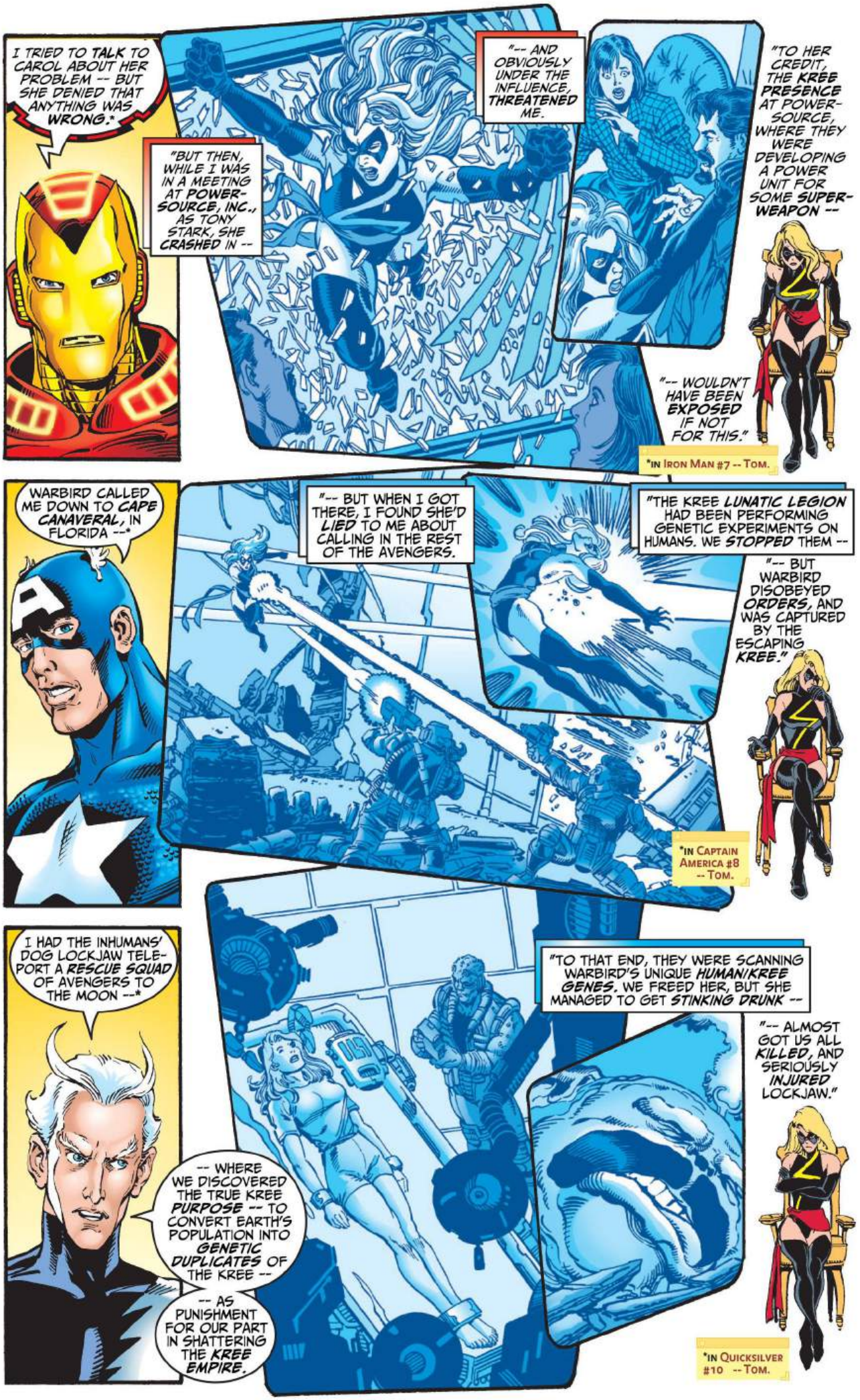
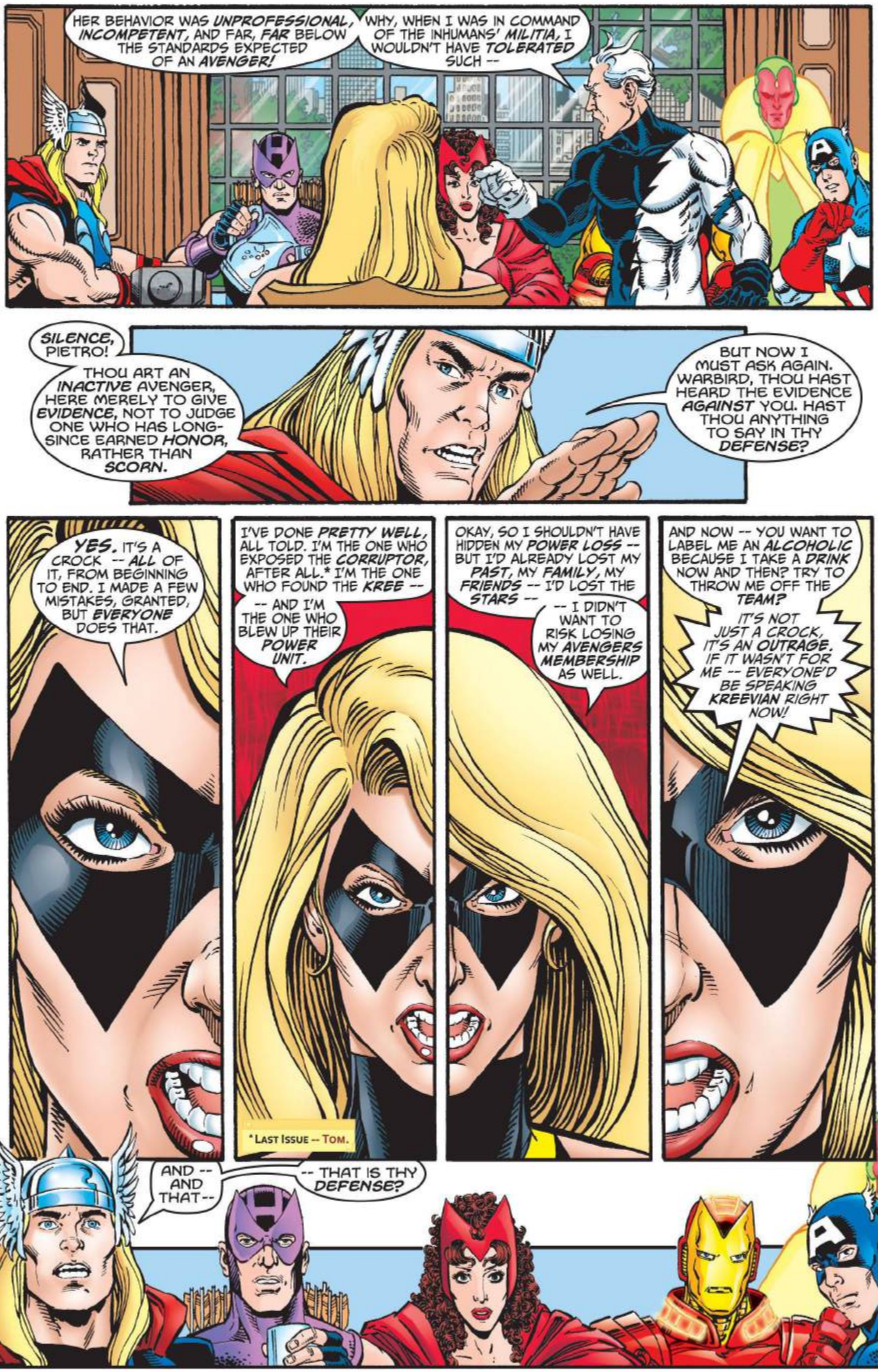
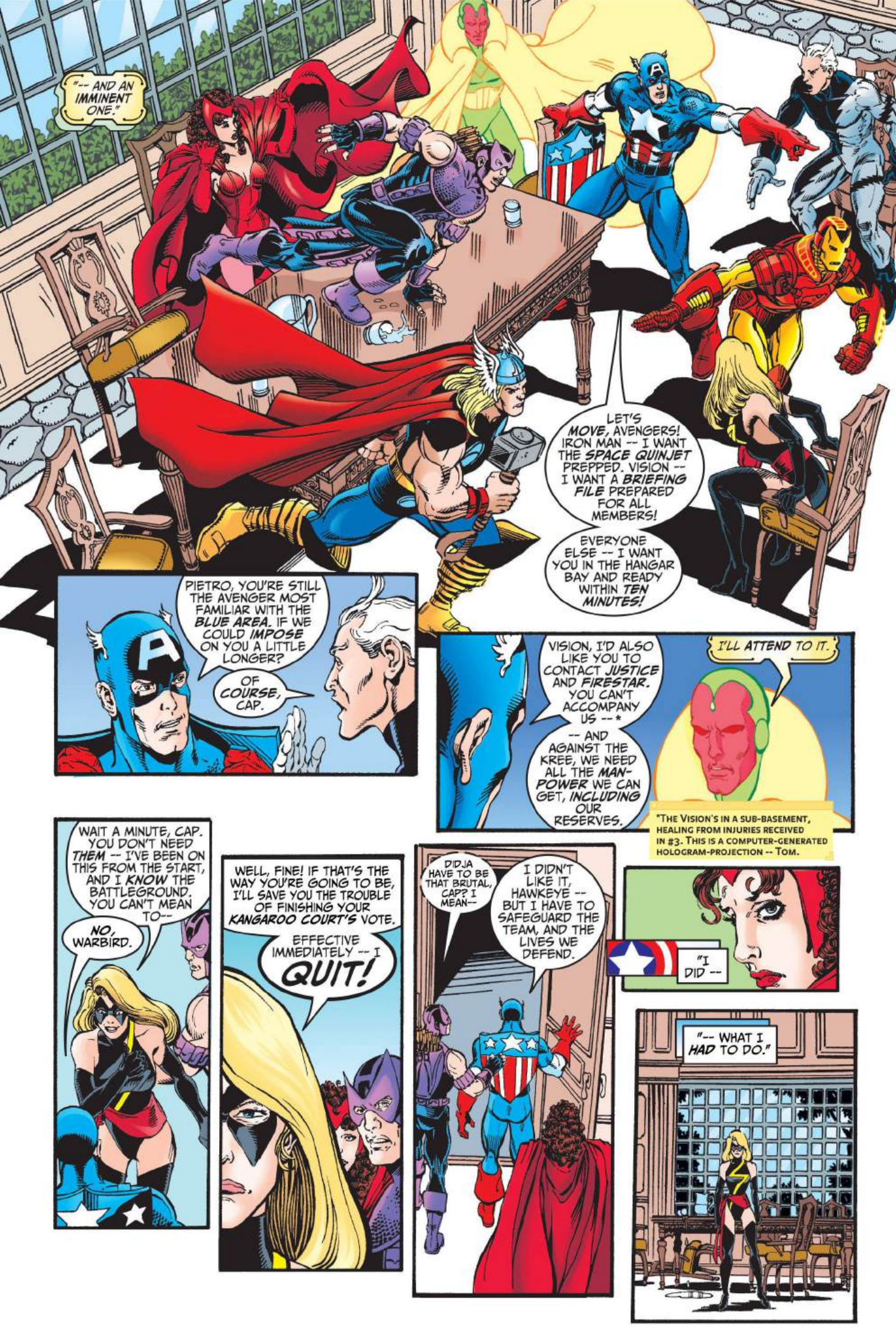

MEANWHILE, ON EARTH -- SPECIFICALLY, IN AVENGERS MANSION...
I HEREBY DECLARE THIS SPECIAL TRIBUNAL OPEN. LET THE RECORD SHOW THAT THE CURRENT ROSTER OF THE AVENGERS IS PRESENT --
-- THOR, HAWKEYE, THE SCARLET WITCH, IRON MAN, THE VISION AND MYSELF, AS WELL AS INACTIVE MEMBER, QUICKSILVER.
STEP FORWARD, WARBIRD. SERIOUS CHARGES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST YOU, REGARDING YOUR FITNESS TO SERVE AS AN AVENGER --
-- AND THEY MUST BE ANSWERED!
THE COURT OF MARTIAL CAROL DANVERS
LIVE KREE OR DIE! 4 OF 4
KURT BUSIEK by GEORGE PÉREZ
AL VEY finisher
TOM SMITH colors
THE USUAL SUSPECTS letters
TOM BREVOORT editor
BOB HARRAS chief
DO WE HAVE TO DO THIS SO FORMALLY, CAP? I KNOW WHAT SHE'S GOING THROUGH, AND --
SHE'S LEFT US NO CHOICE, IRON MAN.
SHE'S REFUSED TO DEAL WITH THIS ANY OTHER WAY -- AND FOR HER SAKE, AND THE TEAM'S, WE HAVE TO ACT.
NOW, AS TEAM CHAIRMAN, IT WOULD ORDINARILY BE MY PLACE TO PRESIDE OVER THESE PROCEEDINGS --
-- BUT SINCE I WILL BE CALLED ON TO GIVE TESTIMONY --
-- I HEREBY TURN THE AUTHORITY TO CHAIR THIS MEETING OVER TO THOR.
MY THANKS, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WARBIRD. ALL THOSE HERE KNOW THEE TO BE A BRAVE WARRIOR AND TRUE, BUT THOU DOST FACE MOST GRAVE CHARGES TODAY --
-- THAT ALCOHOLISM HATH MADE THEE DERELICT IN THY DUTIES, AND A DANGER TO THYSELF AND THY FELLOW AVENGERS.
IF THIS BE TRUE, THEN LET THY COMRADES AID THEE -- HELP THEE TO TRIUMPH OVER THIS.
VERY WELL. WE SHALL HANDLE TESTIMONY IN THIS MATTER IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER --
-- AND THUS, WE SHALL BEGIN WITH IRON MAN.

THOU DIDST EXPRESS RELUCTANCE TO SEE WARBIRD RETURNED TO ACTIVE STATUS AS AN AVENGER. WHY WAS THIS?
THOR, I DON'T THINK IT'S --
-- OH, ALL RIGHT. I SAW CAROL AT THE BAR, DURING THE ROSTER MEETING. SHE MADE AN EXCUSE, PRETENDED SHE HADN'T BEEN DRINKING --
-- AND THAT MADE ME SUSPECT SHE MIGHT HAVE A PROBLEM.*
* IN #4 -- TOM
WHAT?!
YOU MEAN YOU WERE TALKING AGAINST ME FROM THE START -- POISONING OTHERS AGAINST ME --
SILENCE! IT IS NOT THY TIME TO SPEAK.
IRON MAN. THOU DID WITHDRAW THY OBJECTION, ALLOWING WARBIRD TO JOIN. WHY?
BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW FOR SURE -- AND IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN FAIR TO VOICE MY CONCERNS ON SUCH FLIMSY EVIDENCE.
VERY WELL. NEXT, WE SHALL HEAR FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA.
I...SHOULD HAVE NOTICED IT BEFORE. YOU'D OBVIOUSLY LOST A GREAT DEAL OF POWER, CAROL --
-- BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST CHOOSING TO LIMIT YOURSELF, FOR TRAINING PURPOSES. AND YOU WERE FORMIDABLE EVEN AT A LOWER LEVEL.
BUT THEN -- WHEN I ORDERED YOU TO HELP THOR AGAINST HYPERION AND POWER PRINCESS, YOU NEEDED ALL THE FORCE YOU COULD MUSTER --
-- AND YOU STILL DIDN'T TAP INTO THE POWER YOU'D COMMANDED AS BINARY.*
"A TEAM CHAIRMAN NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO DEPEND ON HIS TEAMMATES' ABILITIES. BUT YOU WOULDN'T EVEN DISCUSS IT."
*IN #5 -- TOM.
AND THE TESTIMONY GOES ON...


I TRIED TO TALK TO CAROL ABOUT HER PROBLEM -- BUT SHE DENIED THAT ANYTHING WAS WRONG.*
"BUT THEN, WHILE I WAS IN A MEETING AT POWER-SOURCE, INC., AS TONY STARK, SHE CRASHED IN --
"-- AND OBVIOUSLY UNDER THE INFLUENCE, THREATENED ME.
"TO HER CREDIT, THE KREE PRESENCE AT POWER-SOURCE, WHERE THEY WERE DEVELOPING A POWER UNIT FOR SOME SUPER-WEAPON --
"-- WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN EXPOSED IF NOT FOR THIS."
*IN IRON MAN #7 -- TOM.
WARBIRD CALLED ME DOWN TO CAPE CANAVERAL, IN FLORIDA --*
"-- BUT WHEN I GOT THERE, I FOUND SHE'D LIED TO ME ABOUT CALLING IN THE REST OF THE AVENGERS.
"THE KREE LUNATIC LEGION HAD BEEN PERFORMING GENETIC EXPERIMENTS ON HUMANS. WE STOPPED THEM --
"-- BUT WARBIRD DISOBEYED ORDERS, AND WAS CAPTURED BY THE ESCAPING KREE."
*IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #8 -- TOM.
I HAD THE INHUMANS' DOG LOCKJAW TELE-PORT A RESCUE SQUAD OF AVENGERS TO THE MOON --*
-- WHERE WE DISCOVERED THE TRUE KREE PURPOSE -- TO CONVERT EARTH'S POPULATION INTO GENETIC DUPLICATES OF THE KREE --
-- AS PUNISHMENT FOR OUR PART IN SHATTERING THE KREE EMPIRE.
"TO THAT END, THEY WERE SCANNING WARBIRD'S UNIQUE HUMAN/KREE GENES. WE FREED HER, BUT SHE MANAGED TO GET STINKING DRUNK --
"-- ALMOST GOT US ALL KILLED, AND SERIOUSLY INJURED LOCKJAW."
*IN QUICKSILVER #10 -- TOM.


HER BEHAVIOR WAS UNPROFESSIONAL, INCOMPETENT, AND FAR, FAR BELOW THE STANDARDS EXPECTED OF AN AVENGER!
WHY, WHEN I WAS IN COMMAND OF THE INHUMANS' MILITIA, I WOULDN'T HAVE TOLERATED SUCH --
SILENCE, PIETRO!
THOU ART AN INACTIVE AVENGER, HERE MERELY TO GIVE EVIDENCE, NOT TO JUDGE ONE WHO HAS LONG-SINCE EARNED HONOR, RATHER THAN SCORN.
BUT NOW I MUST ASK AGAIN. WARBIRD, THOU HAST HEARD THE EVIDENCE AGAINST YOU. HAST THOU ANYTHING TO SAY IN THY DEFENSE?
YES. IT'S A CROCK -- ALL OF IT, FROM BEGINNING TO END. I MADE A FEW MISTAKES, GRANTED, BUT EVERYONE DOES THAT.
I'VE DONE PRETTY WELL, ALL TOLD. I'M THE ONE WHO EXPOSED THE CORRUPTOR, AFTER ALL.* I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND THE KREE --
-- AND I'M THE ONE WHO BLEW UP THEIR POWER UNIT.
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
OKAY, SO I SHOULDN'T HAVE HIDDEN MY POWER LOSS -- BUT I'D ALREADY LOST MY PAST, MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS -- I'D LOST THE STARS --
-- I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK LOSING MY AVENGERS MEMBERSHIP AS WELL.
AND NOW -- YOU WANT TO LABEL ME AN ALCOHOLIC BECAUSE I TAKE A DRINK NOW AND THEN? TRY TO THROW ME OFF THE TEAM?
IT'S NOT JUST A CROCK, IT'S AN OUTRAGE. IF IT WASN'T FOR ME -- EVERYONE'D BE SPEAKING KREEVIAN RIGHT NOW!
AND -- AND THAT--
-- THAT IS THY DEFENSE?

I HAD HOPED IT WOULD NOT COME TO THIS, BUT I SEE I HAVE NO CHOICE. I MUST NOW CALL FOR A VOTE. CAPTAIN AMERICA?
WARBIRD'S BEEN A GREAT AVENGER IN THE PAST --
-- AND I'M SORRY IT'S COME TO THIS-- BUT I VOTE FOR DEMOTION TO INACTIVE STATUS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SHE'S CAPABLE OF SERVING ONCE MORE.
"IRON MAN?"
YOU DON'T JUST "TAKE A DRINK NOW AND THEN," CAROL. UNTIL YOU CAN ADMIT THAT... I'M SORRY, TOO. I VOTE WITH CAP.
"VISION?"
MANY AVENGERS HAVE LEFT ACTIVE DUTY UNDER A CLOUD, WARBIRD -- AND RETURNED LATER, STRONGER FOR HAVING FACED THEIR PROBLEMS.
IT IS MY SINCEREST HOPE THAT YOU ARE AMONG THEM. DEMOTION.
"HAWKEYE?"
I'M ALL FOR SECOND CHANCES -- I'VE NEEDED PLENTY MYSELF. BUT I WAS THERE ON THE MOON. I SAW CAROL WEAVIN' AROUND FIRIN' BLIND.
MAYBE IF WE BROUGHT IN DOC SAMSON -- BUT UNLESS SHE'S WILLIN' TO GO FOR THAT, THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER.
"SCARLET WITCH?"
I -- I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
WHEN CAROL JOINED US THE FIRST TIME -- SHE AND I BECAME FRIENDS.
AND WHEN SHE LEFT US -- AND THE WAY SHE LEFT US --
-- IT BROKE MY HEART.
I BEG YOU, CAROL -- AS A FRIEND WHO LOVES YOU -- GET SOME HELP, IF NOT THROUGH US, THEN ON YOUR OWN. I KNOW YOU CAN BEAT THIS THING -- IF YOU'LL ONLY TRY.
BUT -- I CAN'T IN GOOD CONSCIENCE SAY ANYTHING -- BUT --
EXCUSE ME, AVENGERS.
A COMMUNICATION HAS JUST COME IN TO THE MANSION'S COMPUTERS -- FROM THE MOON. IT SEEMS THE LUNATIC LEGION IS STILL A THREAT --

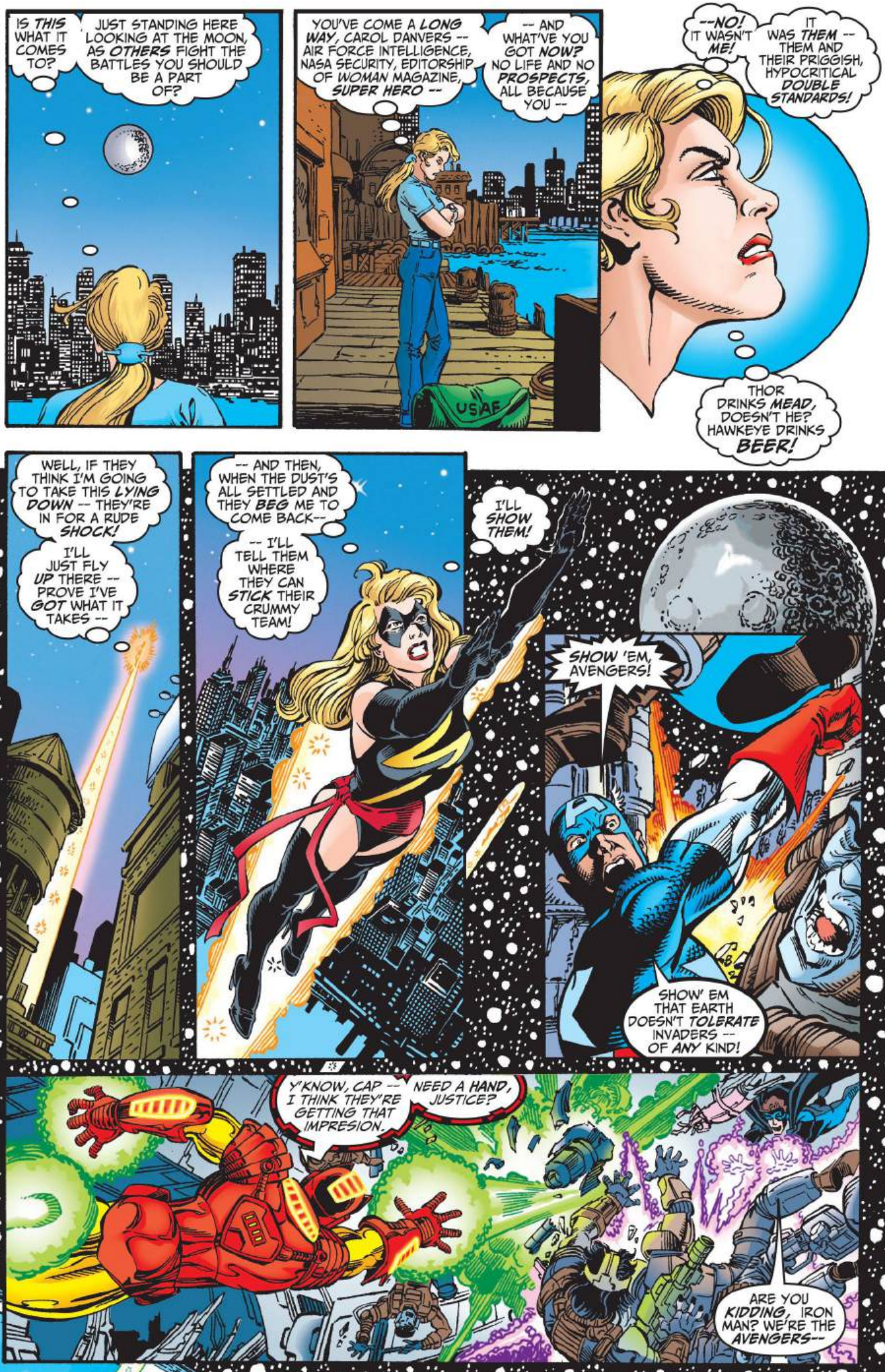

"-- AND AN IMMINENT ONE."
LET'S MOVE, AVENGERS! IRON MAN -- I WANT THE SPACE QUINJET PREPPED. VISION -- I WANT A BRIEFING FILE PREPARED FOR ALL MEMBERS!
EVERYONE ELSE -- I WANT YOU IN THE HANGAR BAY AND READY WITHIN TEN MINUTES!
PIETRO, YOU'RE STILL THE AVENGER MOST FAMILIAR WITH THE BLUE AREA. IF WE COULD IMPOSE ON YOU A LITTLE LONGER?
OF COURSE, CAP.
VISION, I'D ALSO LIKE YOU TO CONTACT JUSTICE AND FIRESTAR. YOU CAN'T ACCOMPANY US -- *
-- AND AGAINST THE KREE, WE NEED ALL THE MAN-POWER WE CAN GET, INCLUDING OUR RESERVES.
I'LL ATTEND TO IT.
*THE VISION'S IN A SUB-BASEMENT, HEALING FROM INJURIES RECEIVED IN #3. THIS IS A COMPUTER-GENERATED HOLOGRAM-PROJECTION -- TOM.
WAIT A MINUTE, CAP. YOU DON'T NEED THEM -- I'VE BEEN ON THIS FROM THE START, AND I KNOW THE BATTLEGROUND. YOU CAN'T MEAN TO--
NO, WARBIRD.
WELL, FINE! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU'RE GOING TO BE, I'LL SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE OF FINISHING YOUR KANGAROO COURT'S VOTE.
EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY -- I QUIT!
DIDJA HAVE TO BE THAT BRUTAL, CAP? I MEAN--
I DIDN'T LIKE IT, HAWKEYE -- BUT I HAVE TO SAFEGUARD THE TEAM, AND THE LIVES WE DEFEND.
"I DID --
"-- WHAT I HAD TO DO."

MINUTES LATER, UPSTAIRS...
THERE SHE GOES, LEAVING US FOR THE SECOND TIME.
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THIS IS TERRIBLY, TERRIBLY WRONG.
THE LAST TIME SHE LEFT, IT WAS BECAUSE SHE'D BEEN MENTALLY CONTROLLED AND SEDUCED BY A MONSTER -- AND WE DIDN'T REALIZE IT.*
*AVENGERS #200, VOL. 1 -- TOM.
WE FAILED HER THEN. FAILED HER UTTERLY. AND NOW IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE FAILING HER AGAIN. WE CAN'T -- WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE THINGS LIKE THIS...
USAF
THEN CAROL DANVERS TURNS THE CORNER, AND IS LOST TO SIGHT. AND THE SCARLET WITCH FEELS LOST AND MISERABLE --
-- AND SHE WANTS SOMEONE TO TALK TO. BUT PIETRO WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND -- AND THE VISION --
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT, WANDA. SHE'LL BE OKAY.
SIMON?! BUT-- I DIDN'T-- HOW--?
HOW AM I HERE? I DON'T KNOW, WANDA -- ANY MORE THAN I KNOW HOW YOU'RE ABLE TO CONJURE ME BACK FROM THE DEAD.*
*AS SHE'S BEEN DOING SINCE #2 -- TOM.
BUT YOU NEEDED ME. AND SO-- I'M HERE.
AND AS WANDA BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF HER OWN BREATHING --
EXCUSE ME, WANDA -- BUT I AM MONITORING THE HANGAR COMPUTERS, AND THE QUINJET WILL BE READY IN MOMENTS.
GOOD AFTERNOON, WONDER MAN.
VISION -- SIMON -- I--
-- OH! HE'S GONE -- AGAIN!
AND I'D BETTER GO, TOO. THANK YOU, VISION, FOR --
-- WARNING ME --

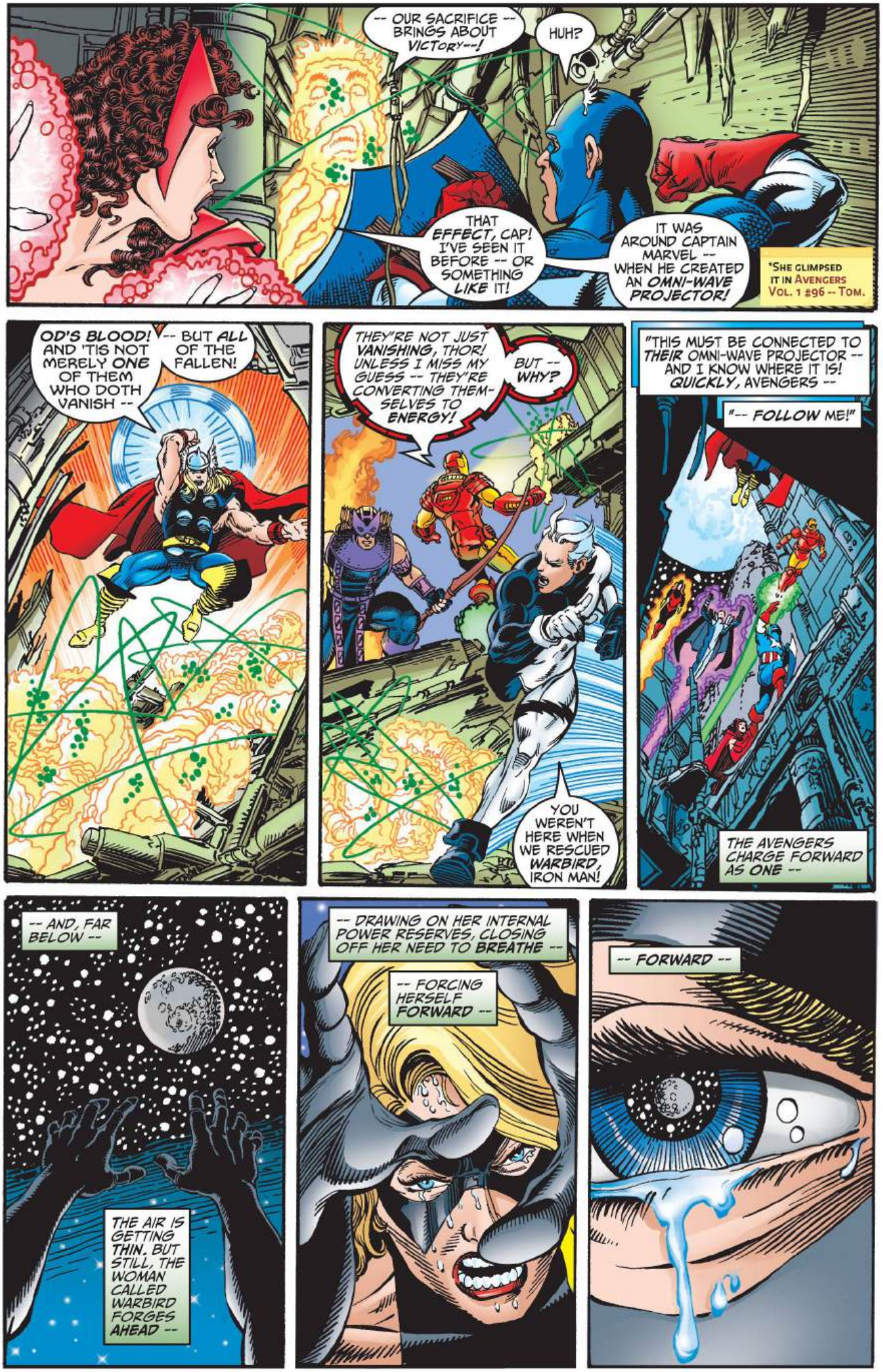
AND SHORTLY --
WAH--
--HOOO!
ROCKETING INTO SPACE -- WITH THE AVENGERS! AS AN AVENGER! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
HONESTLY, VANCE. YOU'VE BEEN IN SPACE BEFORE -- WITH THE NEW WARRIORS --
YEAH, BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT, ANGEL. IT'S -- IT'S JUST DIFFERENT!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MY SISTER? YOU SEEM TROUBLED -- MORE SO THAN YOU HAVE BEEN FOR MANY A YEAR --
IF YOU DON'T MIND, PIETRO -- I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT.
AND WITH THAT, THE QUINJET GOES SILENT -- AND STAYS THAT WAY, UNTIL --
WE'RE APPROACHING THE BLUE AREA. I'M GOING TO MOVE IN QUIETLY, AND SEE IF--
UH-OH! BRACE YOURSELVES, AVENGERS! COMMENCING EVASIVE ACTION --
"-- NOW!"
THEY'RE BETTER THAN I'D THOUGHT! WATCH OUT, CREW --
-- THIS COULD GET A LITTLE ROUGH!

FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MINUTES, THE QUINJET, IN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S HANDS, EXECUTES A DIZZYING SERIES OF BANKS, DIVES AND LOOPS--
-- ALL THE TIME WORKING ITS WAY CLOSER -- EVER CLOSER -- TO THE RUINED TOWERS OF THE BLUE AREA --
-- UNTIL --
MADE IT! WE'RE BELOW THEIR FIELD OF FIRE NOW! AND IN SECONDS --
-- WE'LL BE DOWN!
NICE PILOTING, CAP--
-- NOW CAN WE GO BACK AND GET MY STOMACH? I THINK I LOST IT ON THE THIRD IMMELMAN...
NO TIME, OLD FRIEND. IF WHAT I SEE OUTSIDE IS ANY INDICATION, THE BARRAGE DELAYED US ENOUGH FOR THEM TO REACH BATTLE STATIONS.
LET'S GO, AVENGERS --
"-- WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!"
ZAK
ZAK
POOM
POOM
POOM

WANDA! WE COULD USE--
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, CAP! I'M HEXING HIM UP NOW!
ZAK
BUT MORE AND MORE, I DON'T LIKE IT! WONDER MAN'S NOT A WEAPON --
"-- HE'S A MAN! I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHY I CAN DO THIS -- HOW HE AND I ARE LINKED! AND I'VE GOT TO DO IT SOON!"
KRASH
WAY TO GO, SIMON!
ELSEWHERE IN THE BLUE AREA...
THE AVENGERS HAVE LANDED, ADMIRAL KOR -- AND THEY'RE NOT HERE TO SURRENDER!
THEN PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO HIDE IN A SUPPLY CLOSET, DYLON CIR -- OR DON'T YOU THINK KREE TROOPS CAN HANDLE MERE EARTHERS?
I SAID NO SUCH THING! I--
AT EASE, CHILDREN.
THE AVENGERS CAN HANDLE KREE TROOPS, KONA LOR -- THEY ALWAYS HAVE IN THE PAST. BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER.
PUT THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE ON THE DISPLAY SCREEN.
HAIL, SUPREME ONE! THIS WILL ALMOST ASSUREDLY BE MY LAST REPORT.
THE MOMENT OF SACRIFICE -- AND OF VICTORY -- IS ALMOST UPON US.
OUR TROOPS FALL BEFORE THE TERRAN AVENGERS -- BUT THEY ONLY FIGHT A DELAYING ACTION, HOLDING THE AVENGERS BACK --
-- UNTIL OUR PLANS HAVE PASSED BEYOND THE POINT OF NO RETURN.
WE DEDICATE OUR DEATHS TO YOUR CAUSE, SUPREMOR! ALL HAIL!
BUT THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE SAYS NOTHING.
AND ON EARTH...


IS THIS WHAT IT COMES TO?
JUST STANDING HERE LOOKING AT THE MOON, AS OTHERS FIGHT THE BATTLES YOU SHOULD BE A PART OF?
YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, CAROL DANVERS -- AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE, NASA SECURITY, EDITORSHIP OF WOMAN MAGAZINE, SUPER HERO --
-- AND WHAT'VE YOU GOT NOW? NO LIFE AND NO PROSPECTS, ALL BECAUSE YOU --
USAF
--NO! IT WASN'T ME!
IT WAS THEM -- THEM AND THEIR PRIGGISH, HYPOCRITICAL DOUBLE STANDARDS!
THOR DRINKS MEAD, DOESN'T HE? HAWKEYE DRINKS BEER!
WELL, IF THEY THINK I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS LYING DOWN -- THEY'RE IN FOR A RUDE SHOCK!
I'LL JUST FLY UP THERE -- PROVE I'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES --
-- AND THEN, WHEN THE DUST'S ALL SETTLED AND THEY BEG ME TO COME BACK--
-- I'LL TELL THEM WHERE THEY CAN STICK THEIR CRUMMY TEAM!
I'LL SHOW THEM!
SHOW 'EM, AVENGERS!
SHOW' EM THAT EARTH DOESN'T TOLERATE INVADERS -- OF ANY KIND!
Y'KNOW, CAP -- I THINK THEY'RE GETTING THAT IMPRESION.
NEED A HAND, JUSTICE?
ARE YOU KIDDING, IRON MAN? WE'RE THE AVENGERS--

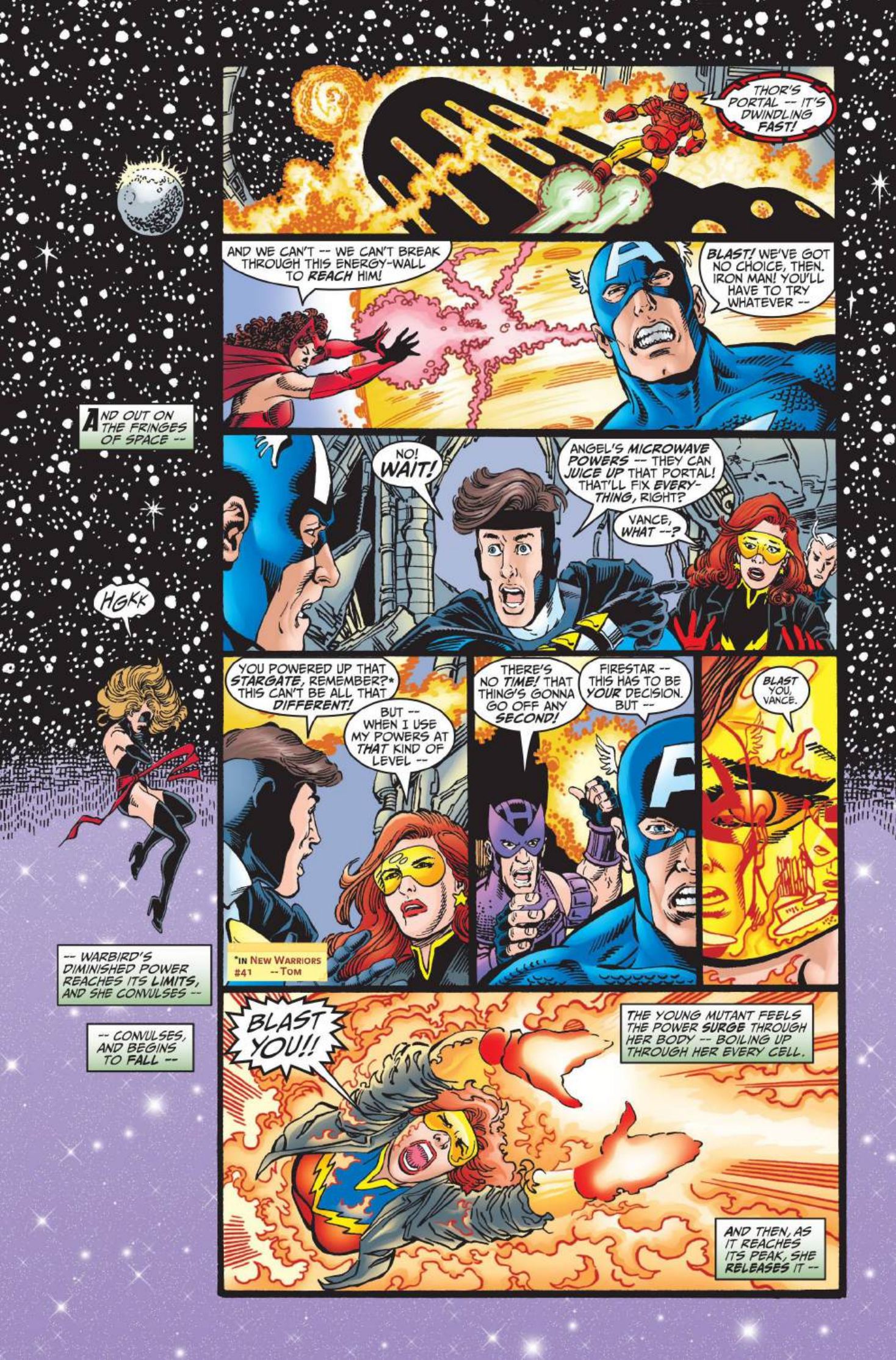
"-- THESE CLOWNS DON'T STAND A CHANCE!"
VERILY, YOUNG JUSTICE -- THOU DOST SPEAK THE TRUTH! THESE MISCREANTS SHALL FALL BEFORE US LIKE RIPE WHEAT!
I DON'T KNOW, THOR! WE'RE DOING OKAY -- BUT THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM--!
A DOZEN, FIRESTAR -- OR A THOUSAND, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE!
WE STAND BETWEEN THEM AND EARTH --
-- AND THE AVENGERS WILL NOT BE MOVED!
WHAT YOU SAID, SPEEDY!
AWRIGHT! DID YOU SEE THAT, FIRESTAR? FIVE OF 'EM --
-- WITH ONE TELEKINETIC BLAST!
ARE YOU CRAZY, VANCE? KEEP SCORE LATER --
-- WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE HERE!
OH!
OOPS!
KEEP UP THE PRESSURE, PEOPLE! WE'VE GOT TO BREAK THROUGH -- STOP THAT SUPER-WEAPON!
YOU WILL FAIL, EARTHER!
FOR THOUGH WE FALL --

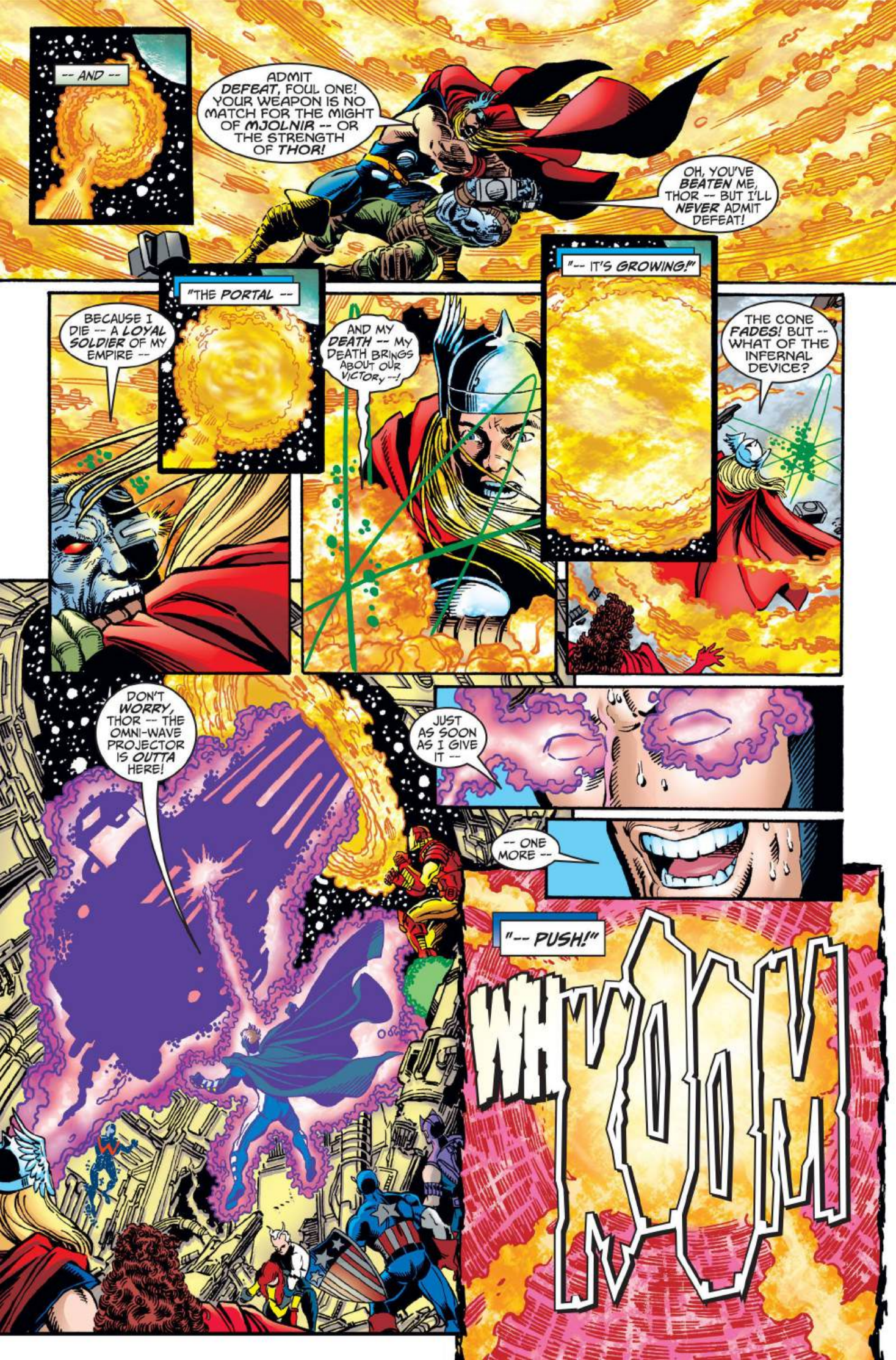

-- OUR SACRIFICE -- BRINGS ABOUT VICTORY--!
HUH?
THAT EFFECT, CAP! I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE -- OR SOMETHING LIKE IT!
IT WAS AROUND CAPTAIN MARVEL -- WHEN HE CREATED AN OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR!
*SHE GLIMPSED IT IN AVENGERS VOL. 1 #96 -- TOM.
ODD'S BLOOD! AND 'TIS NOT MERELY ONE OF THEM WHO DOTH VANISH --
-- BUT ALL OF THE FALLEN!
THEY'RE NOT JUST VANISHING, THOR! UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS -- THEY'RE CONVERTING THEMSELVES TO ENERGY!
BUT -- WHY?
YOU WEREN'T HERE WHEN WE RESCUED WARBIRD, IRON MAN!
"THIS MUST BE CONNECTED TO THEIR OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR -- AND I KNOW WHERE IT IS! QUICKLY, AVENGERS --
"-- FOLLOW ME!"
THE AVENGERS CHARGE FORWARD AS ONE --
-- AND, FAR BELOW --
THE AIR IS GETTING THIN. BUT STILL, THE WOMAN CALLED WARBIRD FORGES AHEAD --
-- DRAWING ON HER INTERNAL POWER RESERVES, CLOSING OFF HER NEED TO BREATHE --
-- FORCING HERSELF FORWARD --
-- FORWARD --

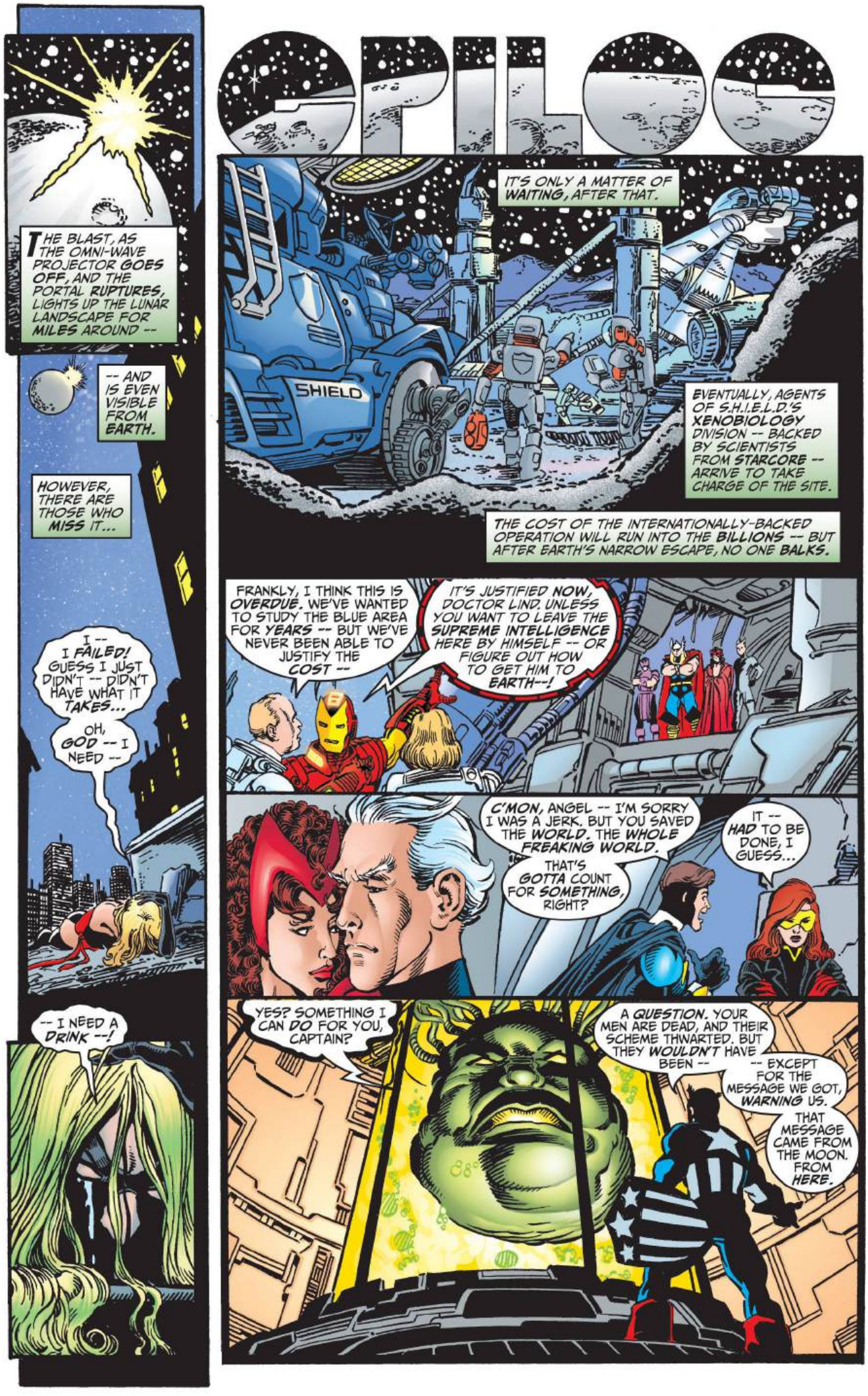
THE OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR.
ORIGINALLY CREATED AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION -- BUT CAPABLE OF BEING CONVERTED INTO A TERRIBLE ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION.
AND IN THIS FORM, MODIFIED BY THE UNCANNY INHUMANS' TERRIGEN MISTS, PROGRAMMED WITH A VARIANT OF WARBIRD'S GENETIC CODE --
HOLY--!
-- IT CAN MUTATE VIRTUALLY ALL OF HUMANITY, TURNING THEM INTO NEO-KREE, AND THE MENTAL SLAVES OF THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE.
THOSE IT DOESN'T MUTATE WILL DIE HORRIBLY.
IF THE AVENGERS ALLOW IT TO BE FIRED.
PIETRO?
YOU ARE TOO LATE, AVENGERS -- FAR TOO LATE!
THE OMNI-WAVE COUNTDOWN IS BEGUN -- AND AT THIS STAGE, NOBODY CAN STOP IT!
WE SAY THEE NAY, TWISTED ONE! WE SHALL DESTROY YON ENGINE OF EVIL, AND --
PIETRO WAS IN THE LEAD --
-- HE BOLTED IN HERE, AND --
PIETRO! HE'S BEEN --
WATCH OUT, WITCHIE -- OR YOU'RE GONNA JOIN HIM!
"WE GOT SNIPERS!"

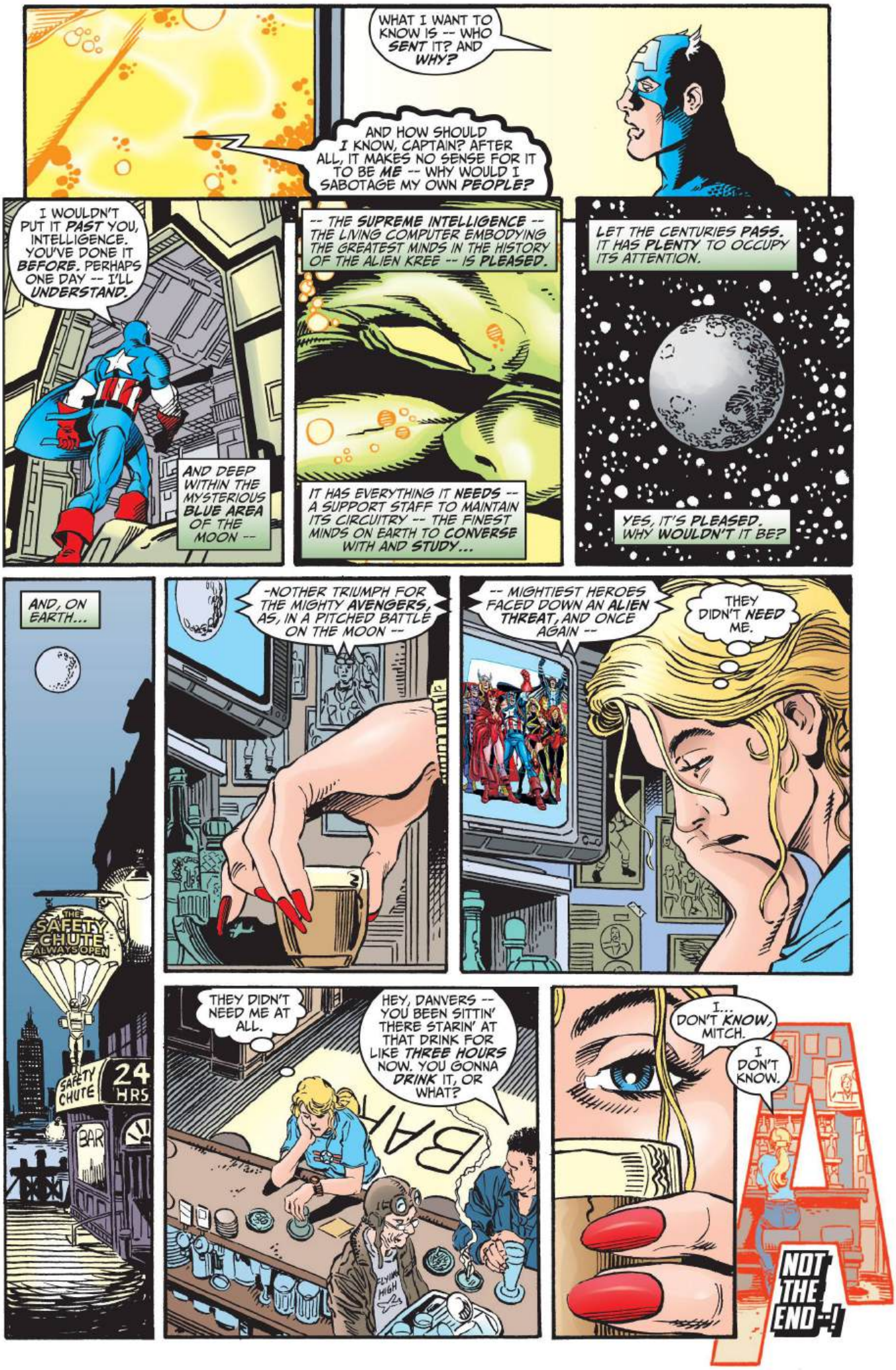
YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO DAMAGE THE OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR, EARTHERS! YOUR PLANET WILL FALL --
-- AND THE KREE EMPIRE WILL BE REBORN!
SAY IT, AGAIN, KREEP! MAYBE IT'LL SOUND MORE CONVINCING -- WITH THAT GUN OF YOURS CRAMMED DOWN YOUR THROAT!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS! IRON MAN --
-- CAN YOU SHUT DOWN THE PROJECTOR?
I CAN TRY, CAP --
-- BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE SUCCESS! WITHOUT A FEW HOURS TO STUDY IT, TAMPERING WITH IT COULD TURN THE THING OFF --
-- BUT IT COULD JUST AS EASILY SET IF OFF!
THEN IF WE CAN'T SHUT IT DOWN, WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE IT! THOR! WE COULD USE THAT HAMMER OF YOURS --
-- TO WHIP UP A DIMENSIONAL PORTAL!
IF THOU DOST DESIRE IT, CAPTAIN --
-- THEN IT SHALL BE DONE!
HIS JAW SET FIRMLY, THE THUNDER GOD WORKS HIS WILL THROUGH HIS MYSTIC WEAPON --
-- AND SLOWLY, BUT SURELY --
-- THE PORTAL OPENS!

BUT --
THE KREE!
THEY'RE --
THEY'RE ALL VANISHING!
NOT ALL OF US, TERRANS! ONE OF US MUST REMAIN ALIVE -- TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF OUR PLAN!
FEEL THE POWER OF THE UNIVERSAL WEAPON, THOR -- FEEL ITS POWER AND FALL!
UHH!
THOR! HE -- HE BLIND-SIDED HIM!
AN' THE PORTAL! WITHOUT THOR TO KEEP IT OPEN --
-- IT'S SHRINKIN'!
QUICK! GET THAT JERK OFF OF THOR!
I KNEW YOU'D ATTEMPT THAT, HUMAN! BUT THE UNIVERSAL WEAPON IS FAR MORE THAN JUST A BLUDGEON!
AMONG ITS POWERS IS THE ABILITY TO CREATE --
"-- A CONE OF INVULNERABILITY!"
BRAM
ZAKT
BLAST!


THOR'S PORTAL -- IT'S DWINDLING FAST!
AND WE CAN'T -- WE CAN'T BREAK THROUGH THIS ENERGY-WALL TO REACH HIM!
BLAST! WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE, THEN. IRON MAN! YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY WHATEVER --
AND OUT ON THE FRINGES OF SPACE --
NO! WAIT!
ANGEL'S MICROWAVE POWERS -- THEY CAN JUICE UP THAT PORTAL! THAT'LL FIX EVERY-THING, RIGHT?
VANCE, WHAT --?
HGKK
YOU POWERED UP THAT STARGATE, REMEMBER?* THIS CAN'T BE ALL THAT DIFFERENT!
BUT -- WHEN I USE MY POWERS AT THAT KIND OF LEVEL --
*IN NEW WARRIORS #41 -- TOM
THERE'S NO TIME! THAT THING'S GONNA GO OFF ANY SECOND!
FIRESTAR -- THIS HAS TO BE YOUR DECISION. BUT --
BLAST YOU, VANCE.
-- WARBIRD'S DIMINISHED POWER REACHES ITS LIMITS, AND SHE CONVULSES --
-- CONVULSES, AND BEGINS TO FALL --
BLAST YOU!!
THE YOUNG MUTANT FEELS THE POWER SURGE THROUGH HER BODY -- BOILING UP THROUGH HER EVERY CELL.
AND THEN, AS IT REACHES ITS PEAK, SHE RELEASES IT --


-- AND --
ADMIT DEFEAT, FOUL ONE! YOUR WEAPON IS NO MATCH FOR THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR -- OR THE STRENGTH OF THOR!
OH, YOU'VE BEATEN ME, THOR -- BUT I'LL NEVER ADMIT DEFEAT!
"-- IT'S GROWING!"
"THE PORTAL --
BECAUSE I DIE -- A LOYAL SOLDIER OF MY EMPIRE --
AND MY DEATH -- MY DEATH BRINGS ABOUT OUR VICTORY --!
THE CONE FADES! BUT -- WHAT OF THE INFERNAL DEVICE?
DON'T WORRY, THOR -- THE OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR IS OUTTA HERE!
JUST AS SOON AS I GIVE IT --
-- ONE MORE --
"-- PUSH!"
WHOOM


EPILOG
THE BLAST, AS THE OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR GOES OFF, AND THE PORTAL RUPTURES, LIGHTS UP THE LUNAR LANDSCAPE FOR MILES AROUND --
-- AND IS EVEN VISIBLE FROM EARTH.
HOWEVER, THERE ARE THOSE WHO MISS IT...
I -- I FAILED! GUESS I JUST DIDN'T -- DIDN'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES...
OH, GOD -- I NEED --
-- I NEED A DRINK --!
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF WAITING, AFTER THAT.
SHIELD
EVENTUALLY, AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.'S XENOBIOLOGY DIVISION -- BACKED BY SCIENTISTS FROM STARCORE -- ARRIVE TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE SITE.
THE COST OF THE INTERNATIONALLY-BACKED OPERATION WILL RUN INTO THE BILLIONS -- BUT AFTER EARTH'S NARROW ESCAPE, NO ONE BALKS.
FRANKLY, I THINK THIS IS OVERDUE. WE'VE WANTED TO STUDY THE BLUE AREA FOR YEARS -- BUT WE'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO JUSTIFY THE COST --
IT'S JUSTIFIED NOW, DOCTOR LIND. UNLESS YOU WANT TO LEAVE THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE HERE BY HIMSELF -- OR FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET HIM TO EARTH--!
C'MON, ANGEL -- I'M SORRY I WAS A JERK. BUT YOU SAVED THE WORLD. THE WHOLE FREAKING WORLD.
THAT'S GOTTA COUNT FOR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
IT -- HAD TO BE DONE, I GUESS...
YES? SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU, CAPTAIN?
A QUESTION. YOUR MEN ARE DEAD, AND THEIR SCHEME THWARTED. BUT THEY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN --
-- EXCEPT FOR THE MESSAGE WE GOT, WARNING US.
THAT MESSAGE CAME FROM THE MOON. FROM HERE.


WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS -- WHO SENT IT? AND WHY?
AND HOW SHOULD I KNOW, CAPTAIN? AFTER ALL, IT MAKES NO SENSE FOR IT TO BE ME -- WHY WOULD I SABOTAGE MY OWN PEOPLE?
I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST YOU, INTELLIGENCE. YOU'VE DONE IT BEFORE. PERHAPS ONE DAY -- I'LL UNDERSTAND.
AND DEEP WITHIN THE MYSTERIOUS BLUE AREA OF THE MOON --
-- THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE -- THE LIVING COMPUTER EMBODYING THE GREATEST MINDS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ALIEN KREE -- IS PLEASED.
IT HAS EVERYTHING IT NEEDS -- A SUPPORT STAFF TO MAINTAIN ITS CIRCUITRY -- THE FINEST MINDS ON EARTH TO CONVERSE WITH AND STUDY...
LET THE CENTURIES PASS. IT HAS PLENTY TO OCCUPY ITS ATTENTION.
YES, IT'S PLEASED. WHY WOULDN'T IT BE?
AND, ON EARTH...
THE SAFETY CHUTE ALWAYS OPEN
SAFETY CHUTE
24 HRS
BAR
-NOTHER TRIUMPH FOR THE MIGHTY AVENGERS, AS, IN A PITCHED BATTLE ON THE MOON --
-- MIGHTIEST HEROES FACED DOWN AN ALIEN THREAT, AND ONCE AGAIN --
THEY DIDN'T NEED ME.
THEY DIDN'T NEED ME AT ALL.
HEY, DANVERS -- YOU BEEN SITTIN' THERE STARIN' AT THAT DRINK FOR LIKE THREE HOURS NOW. YOU GONNA DRINK IT, OR WHAT?
BAR
I... DON'T KNOW, MITCH.
I DON'T KNOW.
NOT THE END--!

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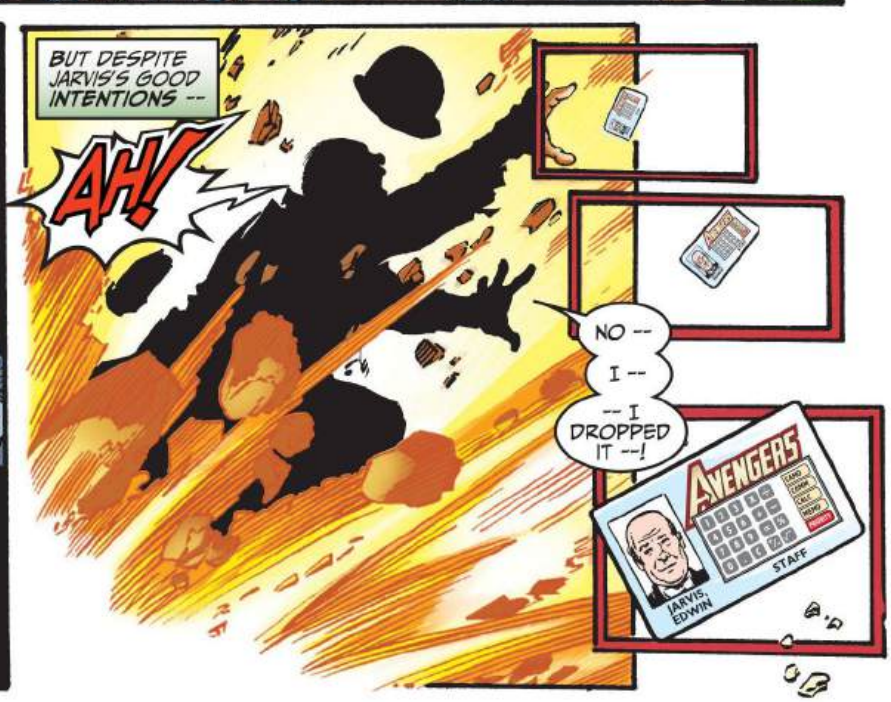
BRAAHAH
BRAAHAH
MOVE, MOVE! BREAK 'EM OUT AND LAY 'EM DOWN! BEFORE THEY CAN REACT --
CHOW CHOW
KRDAM
KRDAM
-- I WANT THIS AREA PACIFIED! PACIFIED -- AND SECURED! NOW MOVE!
SPWEEE

INSIDE...
BRAKKAKKAKKAK
AIEEE!
NO --!

THOSE SOLDIERS -- THEY'RE FIRING HIGH! AND DELIBERATELY SO! AS IF THEY'RE TRYING TO CREATE MAXIMUM CONFUSION --
-- WITHOUT ACTUALLY KILLING ANYONE! STILL, I'D BETTER ALERT THE AVENGERS!


BUT DESPITE JARVIS'S GOOD INTENTIONS --
AH!
NO --
I --
-- I DROPPED IT --!
AVENGERS
STAFF
JARVIS, EDWIN

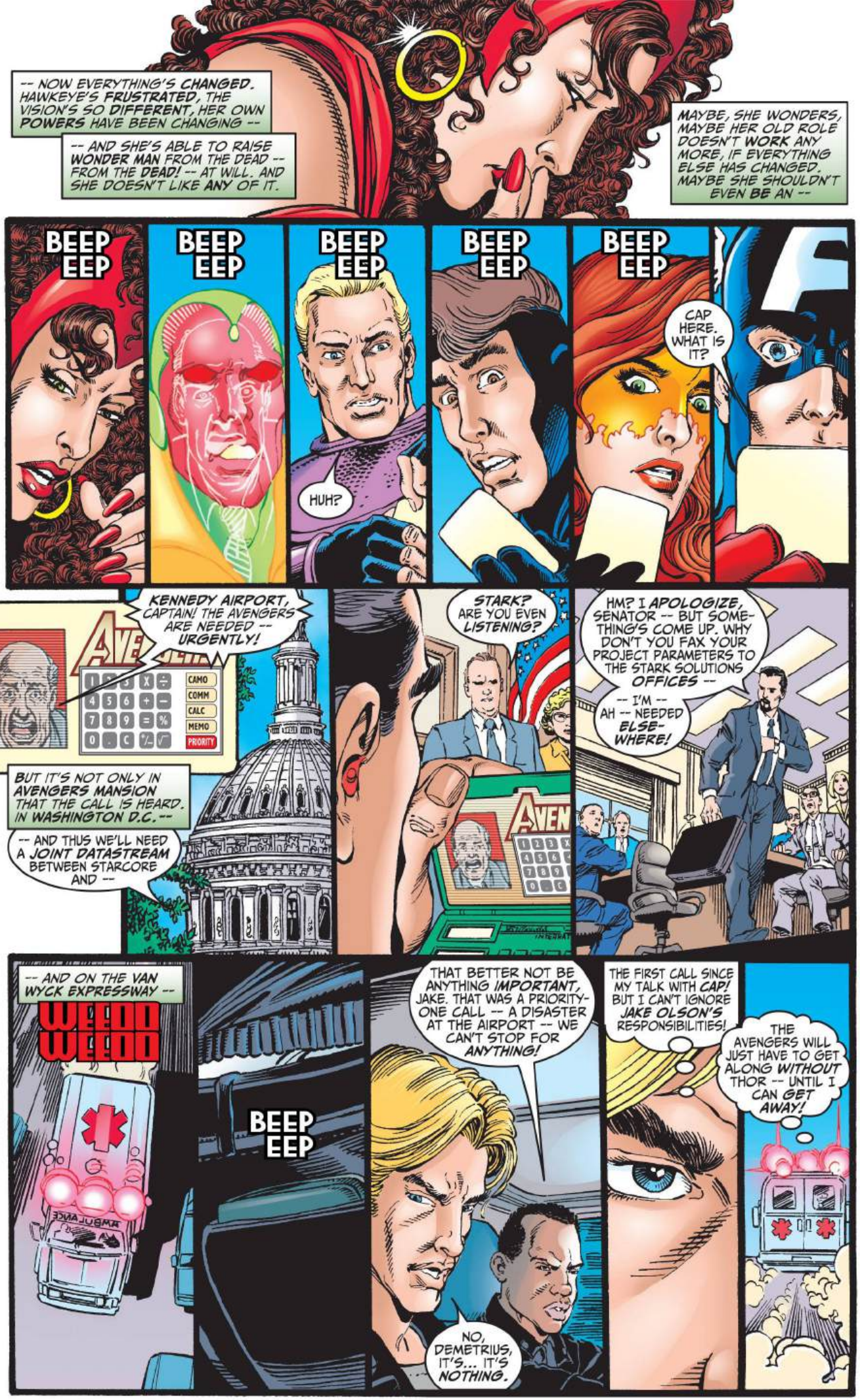
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
Stan Lee presents:
TURBULENCE!
by KURT BUSIEK and GEORGE PÉREZ
AND AS JARVIS SCRABBLES IN THE RUBBLE FOR HIS COMMUNICARD --
EVERYBODY DOWN!
HEED THE WORDS OF LA GARRA ARGENTADO -- THE SILVERCLAW!
COWER WHERE YOU LIE -- AND DO NOT DARE TO MOVE --
-- OR THESE CORRIDORS WILL RUN RED WITH YOUR LIFE'S BLOOD!
HE WANTS TO LUNGE FOR HIS CARD -- OR FAILING THAT, TO FLEE, TO SCREAM FOR HELP. BUT THOUGH HE TENSES HIS MUSCLES, OPENS HIS MOUTH --
-- HE FINDS HIMSELF RIGID WITH FEAR -- UNABLE TO MOVE --
-- AND NO SOUND COMES --
AL VEY inker TOM SMITH colors
RS/COMICRAFT/DAVE LANPHEAR letters
TOM BREVOORT edits BOB HARRAS chief

AT THAT MOMENT, AT AVENGERS MANSION...
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
WHAT IS IT, ANGEL? WHAT'S WRONG?
JUST -- JUST LOOK AT ME, VANCE!
I'M LOOKING -- I'M LOOKING!
I CAN'T WEAR THIS -- I'M PRACTICALLY FALLING OUT OF IT! WHAT, WE JOIN THE AVENGERS, AND THAT MEANS THEY CAN RUN OUR LIVES --
-- EVEN TELL US HOW TO DRESS?
C'MON, HONEY -- IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. THE WASP WAS BEING FRIENDLY -- THE NEW JUSTICE AND FIRESTAR COSTUMES ARE A GIFT --
FINE. YOU WEAR THIS. I'LL TAKE YOURS -- AT LEAST IT COVERS YOU!
IT'S NOT THE COSTUME THAT UPSETS HER -- NOT THIS MUCH.
IT'S BEING PUT IN A POSITION WHERE SHE HAD TO USE HER POWERS AT HEALTH-ENDANGERING LEVELS. WHICH I DID TO HER.*
LOOK, HONEY -- NOBODY'S GOING TO PUSH YOU TO --
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
DON'T SAY A WORD, VANCE. YOU'LL JUST TALK ABOUT WHAT AN HONOR BEING AN AVENGER IS, AND I'LL WANT TO SOCK YOU.
I'LL BE OKAY. LET ME JUST --
"-- LET ME JUST SEE WHAT I CAN DO WITH IT --!"
ANGEL? ANGELICA?
SLAMM
HUH.
GUESS I WON'T EVEN BRING UP MOVING INTO THE MANSION, THEN...

TWO FLOORS BELOW, IN THE COMBAT SIMULATION ROOM --
ASSAULT PROGRAM -- ACTIVATE!
CLK
-- CAPTAIN AMERICA HITS A SWITCH HIDDEN UNDER HIS GAUNTLET, AND --
RAKKAK
BRABAM
BRAM
ATTATTATT
I'VE GOT TO GET IN AS MUCH PRACTICE WITH THIS NEW ENERGY-SHIELD AS POSSIBLE!
NOTHING WILL EVER REPLACE MY LONGTIME SHIELD --
-- BUT I NEED SOMETHING SINCE THAT KREE SOLDIER WRECKED THE REPLICA SHIELD I'D BEEN USING*--
-- AND THE SPARE I'D BEEN KEEPING AT THE MANSION ISN'T ANYWHERE NEAR AS LIGHT, MOBILE AND IMPACT-PROOF AS THIS ONE!**
*IN CAP #8. ** AS SEEN LAST ISSUE (OOPS!) -- TOM.
BUT STILL, EVEN LIGHTNESS CAN BE A TRAP, IF YOU'RE NOT USED TO -- EH?
THE SIMULATION -- IT STOPPED! BUT --
'TWAS I WHO ENDED THE FALSE COMBAT, CAPTAIN. THERE IS A MATTER I WOULD DISCUSS WITH THEE.
CERTAINLY, THOR. WHAT'S UP?
SOME... PERSONAL DEMANDS ON MY TIME HAVE ARISEN OF LATE, AND I DO FEAR THEY WILL REQUIRE A GOOD DEAL OF MY ATTENTION.*
I SHALL DO MY BEST TO REMAIN AVAILABLE FOR AVENGERS MISSIONS, BUT --
*HE'S REFERRING TO HIS NEW HUMAN IDENTITY -- SEE THOR #1-3 FOR DETAILS -- YE TOM.
-- BUT YOU'VE GOT OTHER BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO AS WELL. I UNDERSTAND.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT -- EVEN WITH WARBIRD GONE AND THE VISION INJURED, WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF MANPOWER. DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.

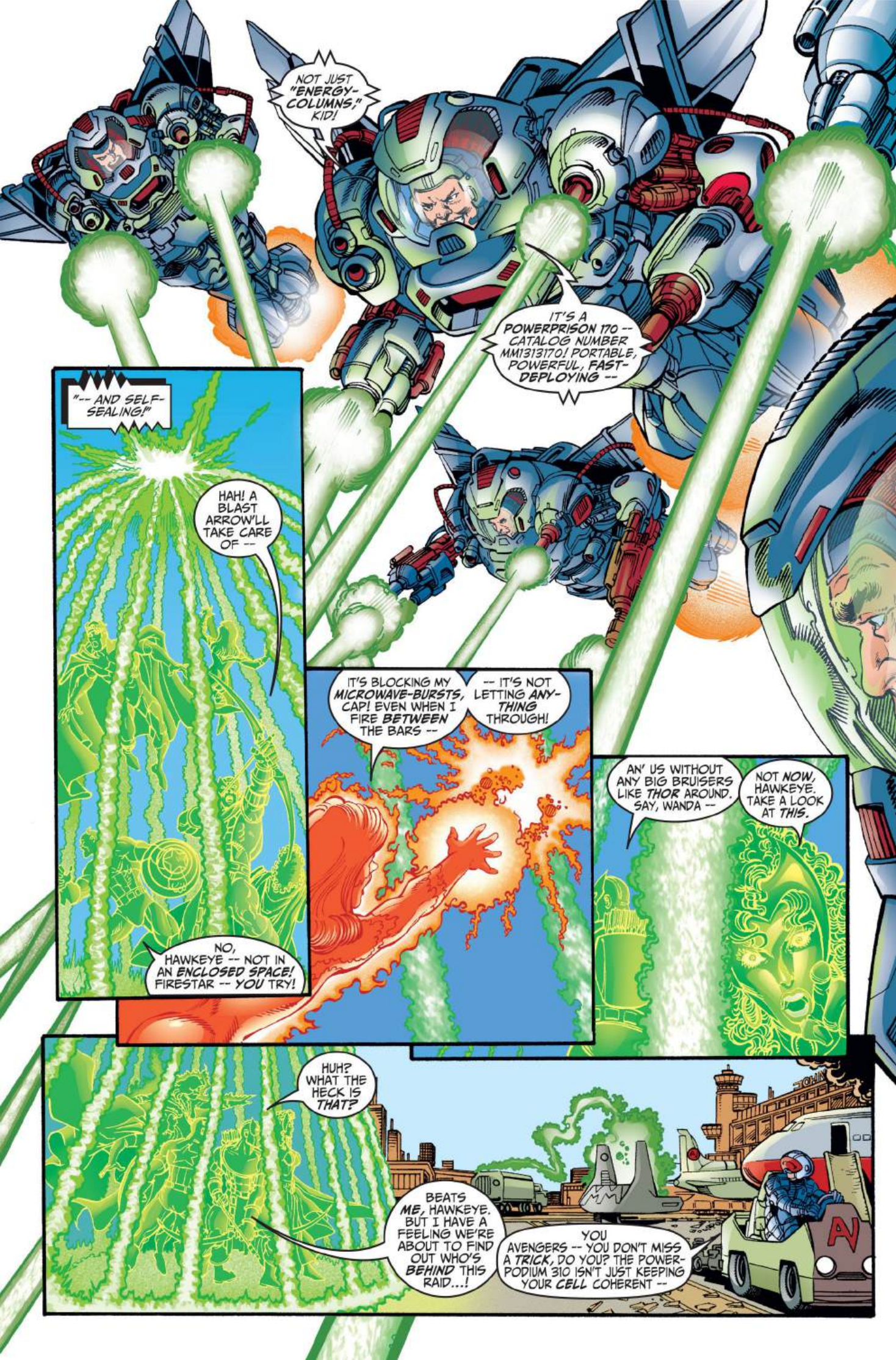
I THANK THEE, CAPTAIN.
I SHALL NO LONGER ABIDE IN THE MANSION, AT LEAST FOR THE NONCE --
-- BUT I ASSURE THEE, THE MATTER SHOULD PROVE TEMPORARY -- AND THOR SHALL ANSWER THE CLARION CALL TO DUTY WHENE'ER HE CAN!
HM. WONDER WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT.
NONE OF MY BUSINESS, I EXPECT. THE AVENGERS HAVE NEVER BANNED THEIR MEMBERS FROM HAVING PERSONAL LIVES OR SOLO CONCERNS --
-- JUST THAT IF IT'S SOMETHING THAT'LL AFFECT THE TEAM, WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IT. AND THOR'S DONE THAT...
ASSAULT PROGRAM -- RESUME!
AND AS CAPTAIN AMERICA PONDERS THE FUTURE, ANOTHER AVENGER TRIES TO MAKE SENSE OF THE RECENT PAST...
HELLO? MRS. DANVERS?
THIS IS... WANDA MAXIMOFF. I'M A FRIEND OF CAROL'S -- YES, FROM THE AVENGERS. I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO HER IF I COULD. IS SHE IN?
OH, SHE DID? I... I SEE.
WELL, IF SHE GIVES YOU A NEW ADDRESS, OR NUMBER... THANK YOU.
CAROL DANVERS -- WARBIRD -- SHE LEFT US UNDER A CLOUD *-- JUST AS SHE DID BEFORE, YEARS AGO.**
AND NOW HER MOTHER SAYS SHE'S MOVED OUT -- MOVED WEST, SHE SAID, TO TRY AND MAKE A NEW START.
I WISH I'D BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO HER -- TELL HER THAT WHATEVER ELSE, I'M STILL HER FRIEND -- AND IF THERE'S ANY WAY I CAN HELP --
HEY, WITCHIE! HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PIECE A' GARBAGE?
CLINT--?
IT'S THOSE FINK THUNDERBOLTS -- PLAYIN' HERO AGAIN, FIGHTIN' GRAVITON --
NOW
*LAST ISSUE.
** VOL. 1,#200 -- TOM.

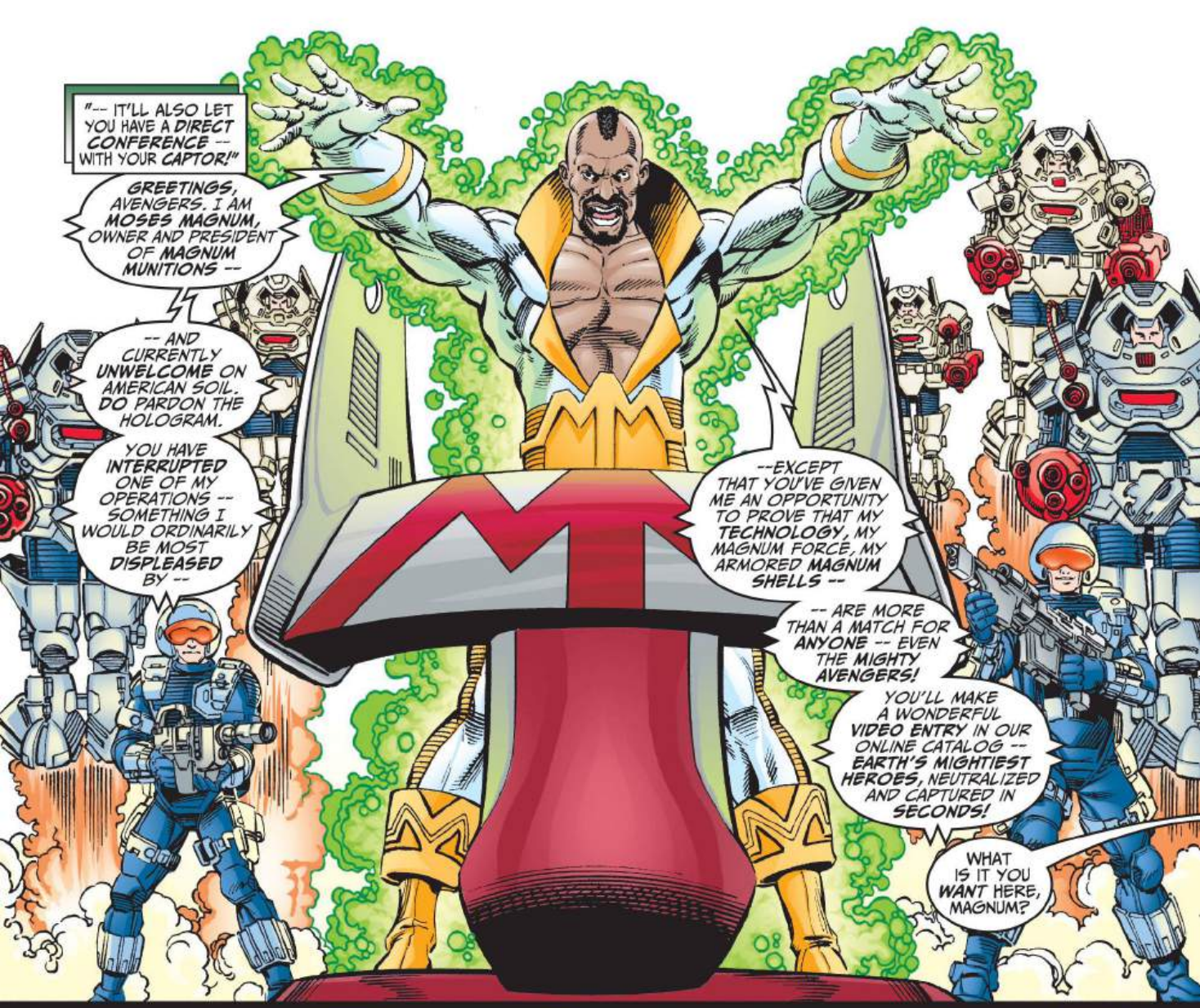
BUT WAIT, CLINT -- IRON MAN SAID THE THUNDERBOLTS HELPED STOP ZEMO'S PLAN TO RULE THE WORLD -- THAT THEY SEEMED SINCERE --*
*IN T-BOLTS #12 -- TOM.
SO THEY SNOWED HIM. BUT THEY DON'T SNOW ME. YOU AN' ME, WANDA, WE STARTED OUT AS CROOKS -- BUT OUR HEARTS WEREN'T IN IT --
-- AN' WE SWITCHED SIDES FAST. THESE CRUMBS, THOUGH -- THEY'RE THE MASTERS OF EVIL -- THEY'VE BEEN CROOKS FOR YEARS!
THEY SCAMMED THE WORLD ONCE --
-- AN' CAUSED ALL KINDSA TROUBLE. THEY DO IT AGAIN, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE NEXT HAWKEYE OR SCARLET WITCH? THEY WON'T HAVE A CHANCE!
I'M GONNA FIND CAP. SOMEBODY'S GOTTA CLEAN THESE GUYS' CLOCKS -- AN' AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THE AVENGERS ARE THE GANG TO DO IT!
MAYBE SO, CLINT...
HELLO, WANDA. THAT'S A NEW COSTUME, ISN'T IT?
VISION! I -- AH -- YES -- I'VE JUST BEEN FEELING MORE IN TUNE WITH MY GYPSY ROOTS, AND --
-- AND, WELL, I THOUGHT IT APPROPRIATE. AND YOU? HOW ARE YOU DOING?
AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED, THANK YOU. MY ANDROID BODY IS STILL UNDER RECONSTRUCTION IN THE SUB-BASEMENT --
-- AND I HAVE ASKED TONY STARK FOR THE MATERIEL I NEED TO FACILITATE THE PROCESS. IN THE MEANTIME, THIS HOLOGRAM FORM SUITS ME.
THAT'S... NICE, VISION. I HOPE IT ALL GOES WELL.
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...?
OF COURSE, WANDA.
IT'S FUNNY, SHE THINKS.
SHE CAME OUT HERE TO FIND SOMEONE TO TALK TO -- AND THERE WAS A DAY SHE COULD HAVE CONFIDED ANYTHING TO THE VISION. BUT NOW --


-- NOW EVERYTHING'S CHANGED. HAWKEYE'S FRUSTRATED, THE VISION'S SO DIFFERENT, HER OWN POWERS HAVE BEEN CHANGING --
-- AND SHE'S ABLE TO RAISE WONDER MAN FROM THE DEAD -- FROM THE DEAD! -- AT WILL. AND SHE DOESN'T LIKE ANY OF IT.
MAYBE, SHE WONDERS, MAYBE HER OLD ROLE DOESN'T WORK ANY MORE, IF EVERYTHING ELSE HAS CHANGED. MAYBE SHE SHOULDN'T EVEN BE AN --
BEEP EEP
BEEP EEP
BEEP EEP
BEEP EEP
BEEP EEP
HUH?
CAP HERE. WHAT IS IT?
KENNEDY AIRPORT, CAPTAIN! THE AVENGERS ARE NEEDED -- URGENTLY!
CAMO
COMM
CALC
MEMO
PRIORITY
BUT IT'S NOT ONLY IN AVENGERS MANSION THAT THE CALL IS HEARD. IN WASHINGTON D.C.--
-- AND THUS WE'LL NEED A JOINT DATASTREAM BETWEEN STARCORE AND --
STARK? ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?
HM? I APOLOGIZE, SENATOR -- BUT SOMETHING'S COME UP. WHY DON'T YOU FAX YOUR PROJECT PARAMETERS TO THE STARK SOLUTIONS OFFICES --
-- I'M -- AH -- NEEDED ELSEWHERE!
-- AND ON THE VAN WYCK EXPRESSWAY --
WEEOO WEEOO
BEEP EEP
THAT BETTER NOT BE ANYTHING IMPORTANT, JAKE. THAT WAS A PRIORITY-ONE CALL -- A DISASTER AT THE AIRPORT -- WE CAN'T STOP FOR ANYTHING!
NO, DEMETRIUS, IT'S... IT'S NOTHING.
THE FIRST CALL SINCE MY TALK WITH CAP! BUT I CAN'T IGNORE JAKE OLSON'S RESPONSIBILITIES!
THE AVENGERS WILL JUST HAVE TO GET ALONG WITHOUT THOR -- UNTIL I CAN GET AWAY!

AND THEY'RE STILL THERE, JARVIS?
AVENGERS
JARVIS, EDWIN
STAFF
CAMO
COMM
YES, SIR. AFTER I MANAGED TO RE-SECURE MY COMMUNICARD, THEY SPREAD INTO THE TERMINAL. BUT IT'S STRANGE --
BRAKKAH
LOOK AT THAT OLD BIDDY RUN! I'LL JUST --
NO, PUERCO! YOU'LL FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS, AND HARM NO ONE --
BDOW BDOW
-- THEY'RE WREAKING HAVOC AND DESTRUCTION, BUT AIMLESSLY!
"ALMOST AS IF THEY'RE TRYING TO DRAW ATTENTION --"
-- OR I'LL GUT YOU LIKE A FISH!
"-- AND DIVERT NOTICE FROM THE REAL PURPOSE OF THEIR RAID!"
BRAKKAH BRAKKAH
ALL, RIGHT -- EVERYBODY OFF! QUICKLY, QUICKLY!
NOBODY BALKS, NOBODY DIES!
AND WHAT'S ON THAT PLANE THAT YOU WANT SO MUCH, SOLDIER?
HUH? WHO --?
YOU CAN DROP THE TELEKINETIC FIELD NOW, JUSTICE.
AS FOR YOU MEN, I'M GIVING YOU TWO SECONDS TO DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND SURRENDER --
-- OR BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL WISH YOU HAD!
ONE!

LOS -- LOS VENGADORES!
WHAT -- WHAT DO WE DO?
DOLLARS TO DONUTS THE CHICK IN THE COSTUME'S THEIR BOSS. WE GRAB HER, AND THE REST OF 'EM'LL BE --
TWO!
SCATTER, AVENGERS! ENGAGE AND TAKE DOWN THE RAIDERS WHILE THEIR ATTENTION'S ON US -- BEFORE THEY CAN GRAB HOSTAGES!
GO!
HAWKEYE OPENS HIS MOUTH TO OBJECT --
-- AND THEN CLOSES IT AGAIN. CAP'S PLAN IS A GOOD ONE, HE KNOWS. AND THAT'S ALL THAT SHOULD MATTER.
BUT THE EXPRESSIONS THAT PLAY ACROSS HIS FACE AREN'T LOST ON ONE OF HIS FELLOW AVENGERS --
HAWKEYE'S TRYING TO FIT INTO AN OLD ROLE, TOO--
-- AND IT'S NOT SITTING ANY BETTER WITH HIM THAN IT IS WITH ME--!
BUT EVEN AS THE AVENGERS BREAK FORMATION --
CODE BRAVO! OMEGA CONTAINMENT STRATEGY -- GO!
AND --
EH?
POOM
POOM
HUH? SOME SORT OF ENERGY-COLUMNS--?
POOM
POOM

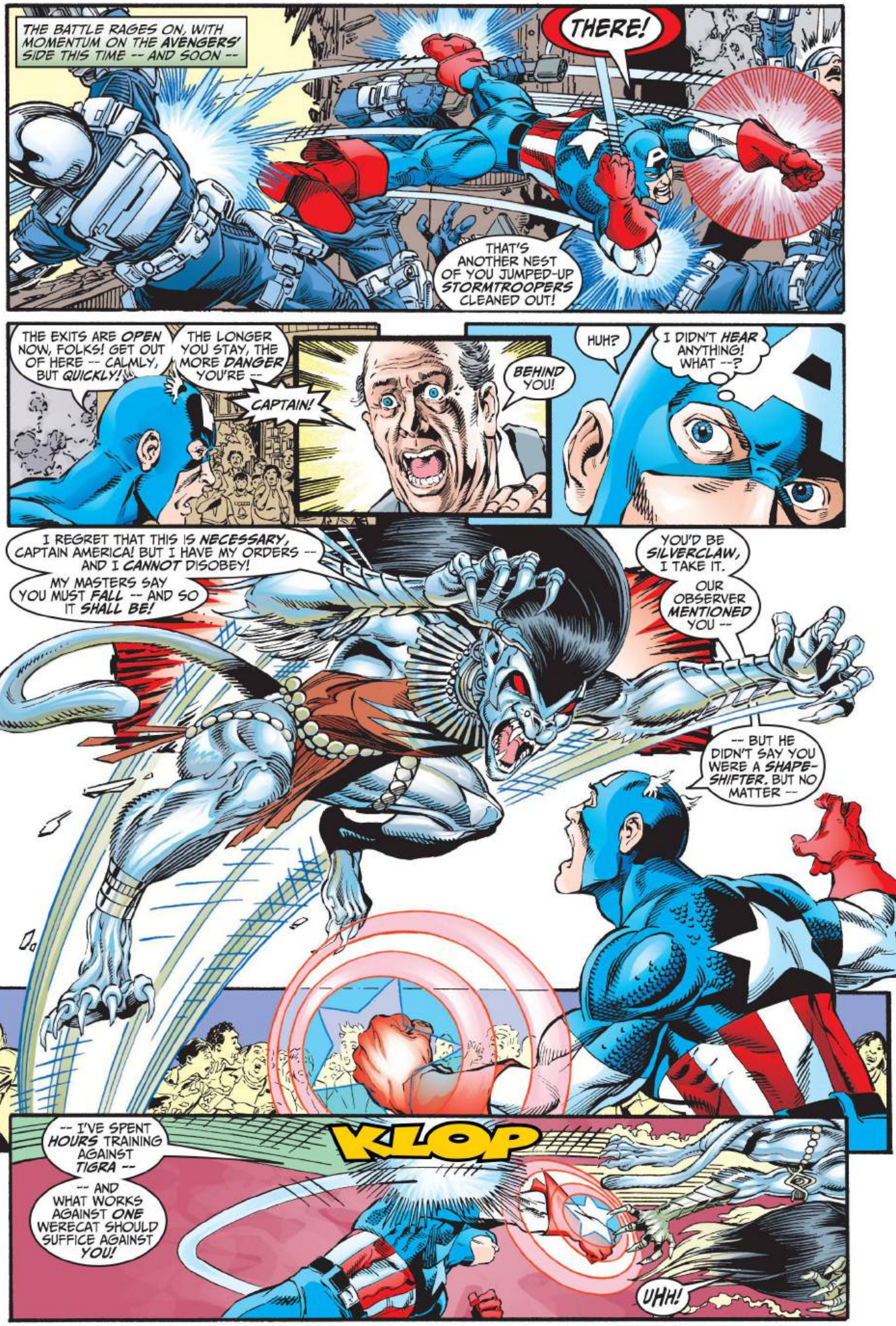

NOT JUST "ENERGY-COLUMNS," KID!
IT'S A POWERPRISON 170 -- CATALOG NUMBER MM1313170! PORTABLE, POWERFUL, FAST-DEPLOYING --
"-- AND SELF-SEALING!"
HAH! A BLAST ARROW'LL TAKE CARE OF --
NO, HAWKEYE -- NOT IN AN ENCLOSED SPACE! FIRESTAR -- YOU TRY!
IT'S BLOCKING MY MICROWAVE-BURSTS, CAP! EVEN WHEN I FIRE BETWEEN THE BARS --
-- IT'S NOT LETTING ANY-THING THROUGH!
AN' US WITHOUT ANY BIG BRUISERS LIKE THOR AROUND. SAY, WANDA --
NOT NOW, HAWKEYE. TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
HUH? WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?
BEATS ME, HAWKEYE. BUT I HAVE A FEELING WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND THIS RAID...!
YOU AVENGERS -- YOU DON'T MISS A TRICK, DO YOU? THE POWER-PODIUM 310 ISN'T JUST KEEPING YOUR CELL COHERENT --


"-- IT'LL ALSO LET YOU HAVE A DIRECT CONFERENCE -- WITH YOUR CAPTOR!"
GREETINGS, AVENGERS. I AM MOSES MAGNUM, OWNER AND PRESIDENT OF MAGNUM MUNITIONS --
-- AND CURRENTLY UNWELCOME ON AMERICAN SOIL. DO PARDON THE HOLOGRAM.
YOU HAVE INTERRUPTED ONE OF MY OPERATIONS -- SOMETHING I WOULD ORDINARILY BE MOST DISPLEASED BY --
--EXCEPT THAT YOU'VE GIVEN ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THAT MY TECHNOLOGY, MY MAGNUM FORCE, MY ARMORED MAGNUM SHELLS --
-- ARE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ANYONE -- EVEN THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
YOU'LL MAKE A WONDERFUL VIDEO ENTRY IN OUR ONLINE CATALOG -- EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES, NEUTRALIZED AND CAPTURED IN SECONDS!
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT HERE, MAGNUM?

YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO INTERROGATE ME, CAPTAIN AMERICA -- ME, OR ANYONE! MY AIMS ARE MY OWN, AND YOU ARE HELPLESS PRISONERS --
-- TO BE DISPOSED OF AS I SEE FIT!
THE AVENGERS ARE NEVER HELPLESS, MAGNUM!
SAVE YOUR ENERGY FOR BREAKING OUT, HAWKEYE. TRY AN ELECTRO-ARROW -- SEE IF THAT DISRUPTS THE --
CAP! OVER THERE --
"--WHAT'S THAT?"
WHRAK
KRAK

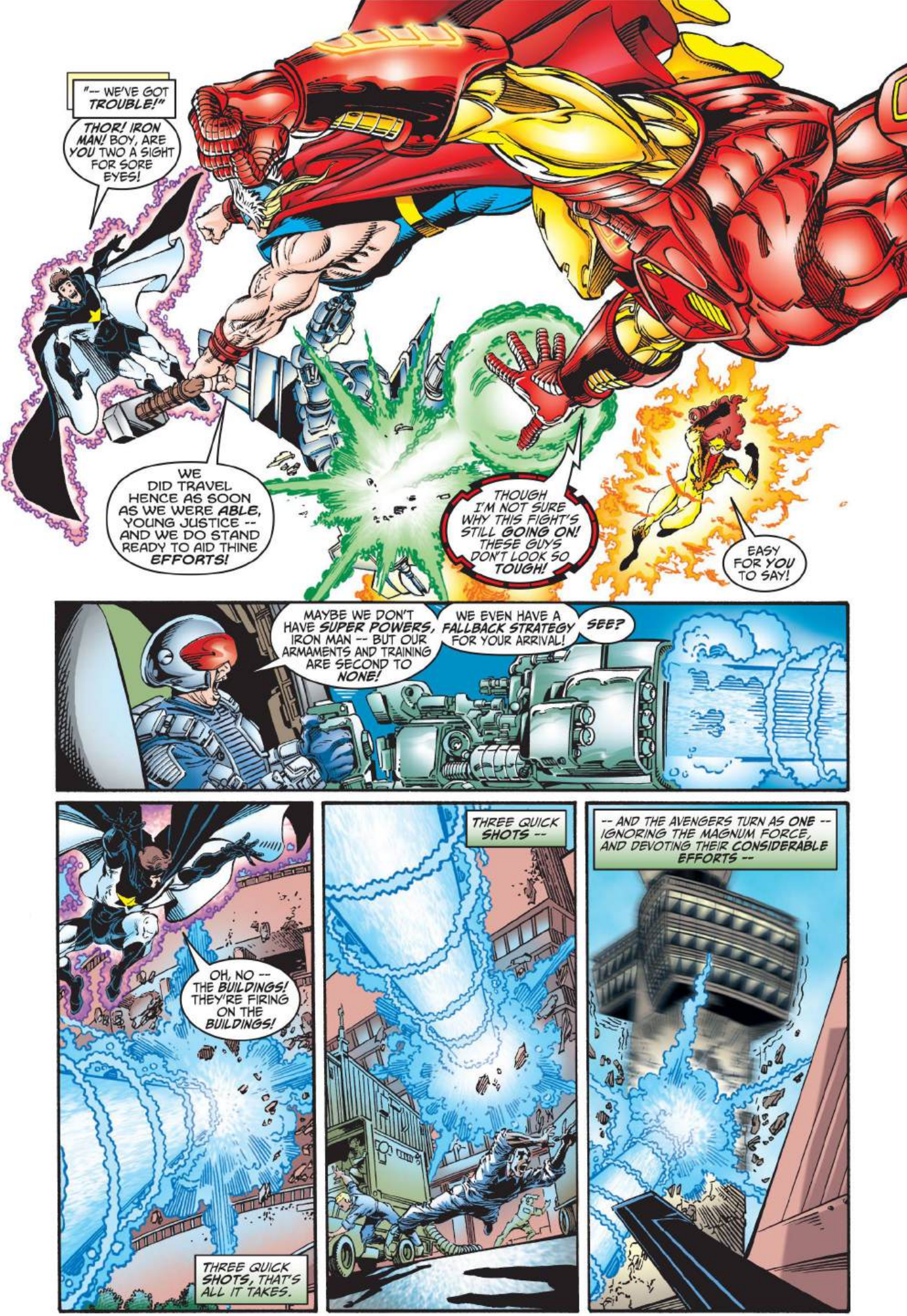
WHAT IS--
-- SKXX --!
KSHH
THE POWERPODIUM -- SHATTERED!
GOOD!
AND -- WITHOUT THAT DEVICE -- THE ENERGY-CELL WILL --
GONE!
WE'RE FREE! BUT HOW-- WHO--?
OVER THERE, FIRESTAR--
"-- HE DID IT!"
NICE TO MEET YOU TOO, AVENGERS! WISH WE HAD TIME FOR TEA AN' CRUMPETS AN' ALL --
-- BUT HEY, AS LONG AS I HELPED YOU OUT, HOW 'BOUT A HAND HERE?!
BRAKKAK BRAKKAK
YOU'VE GOT IT, MISTER! AVENGERS --
CHOW CHOW
CHOW

"--ATTACK!"
AWRIGHT!
TIME FOR A MEETING OF THE MINDS, GUYS -- IF YOU HAVE ANY, THAT IS!
WATCH IT, KID -- I MAKE THE LAME JOKES AROUND HERE!
HEY, GOGGLES -- WHAT'S YOUR STORY, ANYWAY?
UGGK!
HUKKH!
I'LL GIVE YOU THE LONG VERSION SOME OTHER TIME, ARROWS! BUT FOR NOW, THE NAME'S TRIATHLON --
-- AND I'M THREE TIMES AS STRONG, FAST AND AGILE AS AN ORDINARY HUMAN!
AND MAYBE I DON'T GET THE PRESS YOU FOLKS DO -- BUT I'VE BEEN AFTER THESE CREEPS FOR A WHILE NOW!
WELL, NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT THE AVENGERS AREN'T GRATEFUL, TRIATHLON! THERE --
-- A FEW HEX-INDUCED MALFUNCTIONS OUGHT TO GET THOSE MAGNUM SHELLS OFF YOUR BACK!
SO THIS IS TEAMWORK, HUH? I COULD GET USED TO THIS!
AND YOU'RE WELCOME TO IT, TRIATHLON!
HIT 'EM, PEOPLE -- SAME PLAN AS BEFORE! SPREAD OUT, AND KEEP 'EM ENGAGED -- SO THEY CAN'T GRAB HOSTAGES!
WILL DO, CAP!
I CAN HANDLE THESE GUYS WITH SOME MEDIUM-POWER BURSTS --
-- BUT EVENTUALLY, I'LL BE ASKED TO CUT LOOSE AGAIN --
-- TO CHOOSE BETWEEN MY RESPONSIBILITIES AND MY HEALTH! WHAT THEN--?


THE BATTLE RAGES ON, WITH MOMENTUM ON THE AVENGERS' SIDE THIS TIME -- AND SOON --
THERE!
THAT'S ANOTHER NEST OF YOU JUMPED-UP STORMTROOPERS CLEANED OUT!
THE EXITS ARE OPEN NOW, FOLKS! GET OUT OF HERE -- CALMLY, BUT QUICKLY!
THE LONGER YOU STAY, THE MORE DANGER YOU'RE --
CAPTAIN!
BEHIND YOU!
HUH?
I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING! WHAT --?
I REGRET THAT THIS IS NECESSARY, CAPTAIN AMERICA! BUT I HAVE MY ORDERS -- AND I CANNOT DISOBEY!
MY MASTERS SAY YOU MUST FALL -- AND SO IT SHALL BE!
YOU'D BE SILVERCLAW, I TAKE IT.
OUR OBSERVER MENTIONED YOU --
-- BUT HE DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE A SHAPE-SHIFTER. BUT NO MATTER --
-- I'VE SPENT HOURS TRAINING AGAINST TIGRA --
-- AND WHAT WORKS AGAINST ONE WERECAT SHOULD SUFFICE AGAINST YOU!
KLOP
UHH!

I AM NO MERE WERECAT, CAPTAIN! I AM LA GARRA ARGENTADO -- AND ALL THE JUNGLE'S ASPECTS LIVE IN ME!
IF THE STEALTH OF THE JAGUAR WAS NOT SUFFICIENT TO BEAT YOU, THEN THE WINGS OF THE COCKATOO WILL CARRY ME ABOVE YOUR LUNGE --
-- AND THE STRENGTH OF THE ANACONDA --
-- WILL CRUSH THE BREATH FROM YOU!
HGKK!
OR CAN YOUR TIGRA DO THIS, AS WELL --?
BLAST! THIS IS MY FAULT, FOR BEING OVERCONFIDENT! I'D ASSUMED THAT THE CAT-FORM WAS HER ONLY TRICK!
"WORSE, THE MAGNUM FORCE HAS HAD A CHANCE TO RALLY -- AND THEY CAME PREPARED TO GO UP AGAINST THE AVENGERS!"
AGGGH!
"ULTRASONICS, TO RATTLE JUSTICE'S CONCENTRATION, AND KEEP HIM FROM BRINGING HIS TELEKINESIS TO BEAR --
"-- RADIATION-PROOF WRAPPINGS TO ENSNARE FIRESTAR --"
WH-WHAT? NO!
"-- SHOCK-BLASTS TO KEEP WANDA UNSTEADY ON HER FEET, UNABLE TO AIM HER HEXES --"
AAAAH!
"-- AND AGAINST HAWKEYE -- HIGH POWERED FANS!"
YOU LIKE GAS ARROWS SO MUCH, FELLA -- YOU HAVE A TASTE!
HKK!
WE NEED PHYSICAL POWER, WANDA -- AND WE NEED IT NOW!
OKAY, CAP! I'LL --

THE YOUNG MUTANT CONCENTRATES, INTENDING TO SUMMON SIMON WILLIAMS -- WONDER MAN -- BUT --
I -- I CAN'T, CAP! I WON'T!
HE'S NOT JUST SOME -- SOME GUN WE CAN DRAW WHENEVER WE NEED HIM! HE'S A PERSON! AND I WON'T JUST -- USE HIM--!
I DUNNO WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT, MISTER -- BUT IF IT'S PHYSICAL POWER YOU WANT --
-- HAVE SOME OF MINE!
THANKS, TRIATHLON!
WANDA -- WARBIRD -- FIRESTAR -- HAWKEYE -- I DON'T REMEMBER A TIME THIS TEAM WAS EVER SO TROUBLED -- SO FRACTIOUS!
I'LL HAVE TO ADDRESS THAT -- BUT LATER! RIGHT NOW --
ALL DUE RESPECT, BIG GUY -- BUT WE'RE WASTIN' TIME. THIS WHOLE OPERATION IS JUST A LOT OF NOISE TO COVER THE THEFT --
-- OF AN EXPERIMENTAL SEISMIC CANNON THAT'S BEIN' TRANSSHIPPED THROUGH HERE!
SEISMIC--? MAGNUM'S BEEN INVOLVED IN EARTHQUAKE THREATS BEFORE -- IS THIS CONNECTED?
I DUNNO, CAP --
-- BUT I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT!
OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED! AND NOW, AVENGERS --
-- YOU'RE ABOUT TO FEEL WHAT RAW SEISMIC POWER CAN DO -- TO HUMAN FLESH!
I SAY THEE NAY, MISCREANT!
"I SAY THEE" --? AWWWW, NUTS!
MAGNUM FORCE --

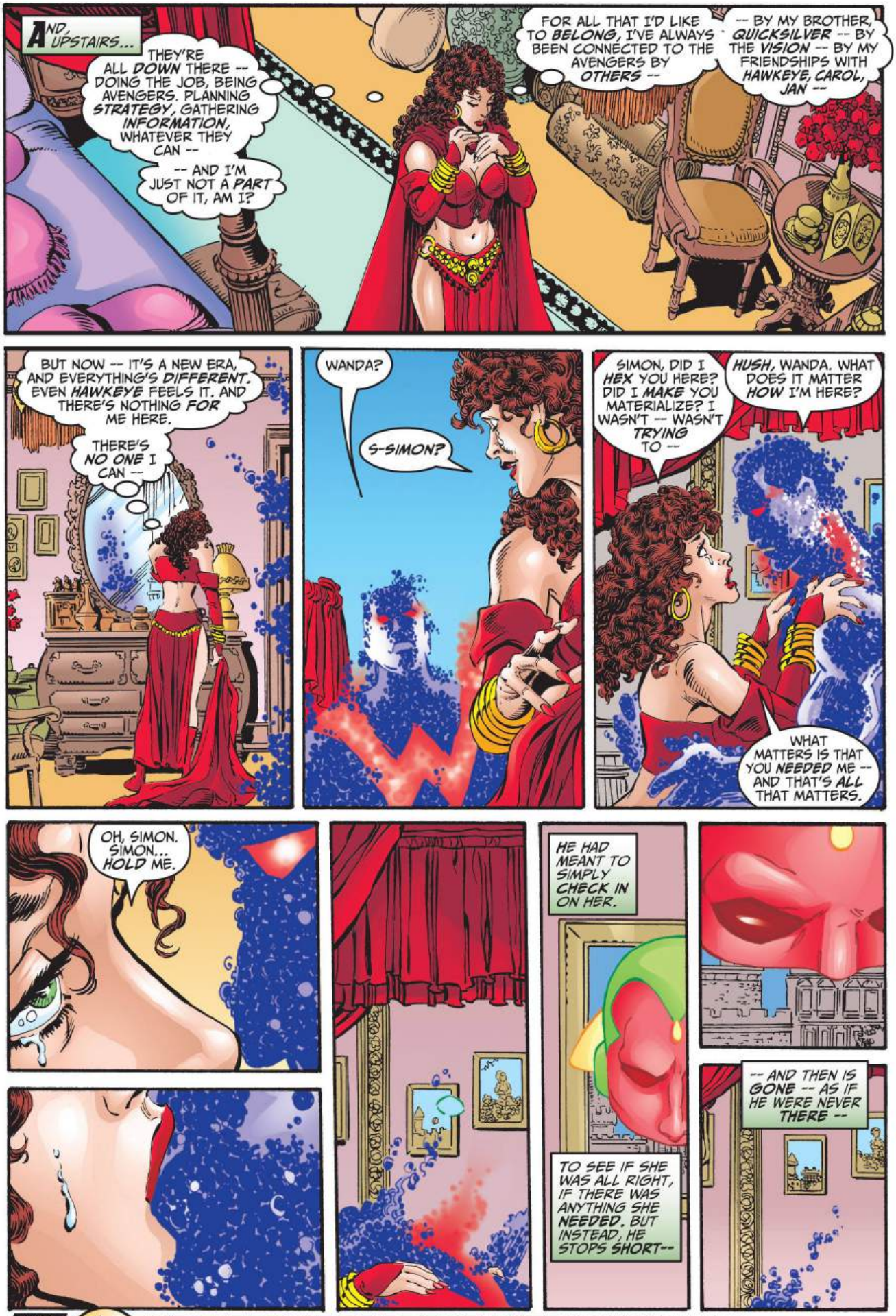

"-- WE'VE GOT TROUBLE!"
THOR! IRON MAN! BOY, ARE YOU TWO A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES!
WE DID TRAVEL HENCE AS SOON AS WE WERE ABLE, YOUNG JUSTICE -- AND WE DO STAND READY TO AID THINE EFFORTS!
THOUGH I'M NOT SURE WHY THIS FIGHT'S STILL GOING ON! THESE GUYS DON'T LOOK SO TOUGH!
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY!
MAYBE WE DON'T HAVE SUPER POWERS, IRON MAN -- BUT OUR ARMAMENTS AND TRAINING ARE SECOND TO NONE!
WE EVEN HAVE A FALLBACK STRATEGY FOR YOUR ARRIVAL!
SEE?
OH, NO -- THE BUILDINGS! THEY'RE FIRING ON THE BUILDINGS!
THREE QUICK SHOTS, THAT'S ALL IT TAKES.
THREE QUICK SHOTS --
-- AND THE AVENGERS TURN AS ONE -- IGNORING THE MAGNUM FORCE, AND DEVOTING THEIR CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS --

-- TO SAFEGUARDING INNOCENTS!
I'VE GOT THIS LOAD OF RUBBLE, CAP -- BUT I CAN'T HOLD IT MUCH LONGER!
SHUNT IT AS FAR EAST AS YOU CAN, VANCE! WE'RE ALMOST CLEAR!
MAYBE I WAS TOO HASTY IN WHAT I SAID BEFORE. INDIVIDUALLY, THOSE RAIDERS AREN'T MUCH --
-- BUT IT'S NOT POWER THAT MATTERS SO MUCH AS HOW YOU USE IT! CAP'S TAUGHT ME THAT OFTEN ENOUGH!
THIS WAY! KEEP MOVING!
GET THEE GONE, MEN AND WOMEN OF MIDGARD! THE SON OF ODIN SHALL VOUCHSAFE THY SAFETY --
-- AYE, THOUGH HE MUST HOLD THIS STRUCTURE FOR A FORTNIGHT!
AND, AS THE AVENGERS DEAL WITH THE CRISIS...
MAGNUM'S MEN -- THEY'RE RUNNING!
THEY'RE NOT JUST STEALIN' THE SEISMIC CANNON -- BUT THE WHOLE PLANE IT WAS BEIN' SHIPPED IN!
GOOD THING THE OTHERS HAVE THINGS UNDER CONTROL -- BECAUSE TRIATHLON --
-- HAS A PLANE TO CATCH!

AND SHORTLY, AS AEROVERDE FLIGHT 26 FINALLY DISEMBARKS...
CAP HASN'T SAID ANYTHING ABOUT MY REFUSING TO HEX UP SIMON -- YET.
BUT WHAT DO I DO WHEN HE DOES? CAROL COULDN'T ACCESS HER FULL POWER --
-- BUT I SIMPLY REFUSED TO. AND I KNOW -- I SHOULD HAVE.
HAWKEYE, THOR -- CONTINUE TO SWEEP FOR STRAGGLERS. OR FOR TRIATHLON -- HE MIGHT BE WOUNDED.
JUSTICE, FIRESTAR, IRON MAN --
-- NICE WORK!
HEY, CAP -- TAKE A GANDER! NO TRIATHLON -- BUT I DID FIND SOMEONE...
OH, CAPTAIN AMERICA! I'M SO SORRY I ATTACKED YOU-- AND THE THINGS I SAID--!
THOSE MEN -- THEY TOOK OVER THE PLANE IN COSTA VERDE, WHERE THE SECURITY IS LESS STRICT. I TRIED TO STOP THEM --
-- BUT THEY THREATENED TO KILL THE PASSENGERS, UNLESS I HELPED THEM!
THEY HAD HOSTAGES THE WHOLE TIME? WHY DIDN'T THEY USE THEM?
THIS'LL HAVE TO BE BACKED UP WITH SUPPORT SCAFFOLDING -- AND MORE EXTENSIVE REPAIRS LATER.
BUT FOR NOW -- IT'LL HELP TO GET THE AIRPORT UP AND RUNNING AGAIN, WITHOUT STRANDING THOUSANDS!
THEY HAD NO NEED TO -- THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN STOPPING YOU, THEY SAID, ONLY IN CAUSING A LARGE ENOUGH COMMOTION --
-- TO DISTRACT FROM THEIR THEFT. I TOLD THEM I COULD ONLY COOPERATE -- IF NO ONE WAS TO BE KILLED.
IF THAT'S TRUE, YOUNG LADY, WE OWE YOU A DEBT OF THANKS. THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE HERE -- BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN FAR WORSE.
I'LL CHECK OUT YOUR STORY, BUT FIRST --
-- WHY WERE YOU ON THE PLANE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
WELL, YOU SEE --

AND...
-- DE GUADALUPE SANTIAGO! SURELY YOU HAVE SOMETHING--!
HERE SHE IS -- SHE'S ON OUR PASSENGER MANIFEST --
-- BUT BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE LOGGED EVERY PASSENGER GETTING OFF THE PLANE -- AND I'M AFRAID SHE WASN'T ONE OF THEM.
BUT -- THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE! COULD YOU LOOK AGAIN -- I HAVE HER PICTURE HERE --
JARVIS.
SIR?
JARVIS, HOW OLD IS THIS PHOTOGRAPH?
WHY, SHE SENT IT WITH HER FIRST LETTER.
THAT WAS -- GOODNESS, THAT WAS OVER A DECADE AGO! BEFORE THE AVENGERS WERE EVEN FORMED! SHE -- MUST BE OLDER THAN THIS--!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. HAWKEYE?
EDWIN JARVIS, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MARIA DE GUADALUPE SANTIAGO -- A.K.A. SILVERCLAW.
I -- SHE -- YOU--
HOLA, TIO EDWIN. ARE YOU -- ARE YOU MAD AT ME--?
MAD AT YOU? WHY, CHILD, I COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE--
-- OH!
NOW, NOW, CHILD -- THERE'S NO NEED TO CRY--!
YOU KNOW, JARVIS SHOULD TAKE MORE DAYS OFF. IF NOTHING ELSE -- THE DAY SURE WASN'T DULL...
NO, HAWKEYE, IT WASN'T -- AND IT'S NOT OVER YET.

LATER, BACK AT AVENGERS MANSION...
I AM VERY SORRY, TIO EDWIN.
IF I'D KNOWN THAT WAS YOU...
IT'S OF NO IMPORTANCE, LUPE -- REALLY. AND I'M QUITE ALL RIGHT, I PROMISE YOU--!
HMM. MAGNUM IS AN ECO-TERRORIST AS WELL AS A MUNITIONS DEALER -- AND MAY HAVE SEISMIC POWERS HIMSELF, IT SAYS HERE.
HE'S FOUGHT THE X-MEN, POWER MAN, DEATHLOK...
-- THE F.A.A. HAD ANY LUCK IN TRACKING THE PLANE'S DIRECTION, MISTER CAWLEY?
WE'LL HAVE THAT DATA SHORTLY, IRON MAN--
DON'T BELIEVE IT...
MEN WITH GUNS, ANGEL. WE GOT BEATEN -- BY MEN WITH GUNS! I'VE GOT TO DO BETTER THAN I'VE DONE SO FAR! I'VE GOT TO!
WHAT, IT'S ALL ON YOUR SHOULDERS, VANCE? HOW DOES THAT--?
BE AT EASE, VANCE ASTROVIK.
E'EN CAPTAIN AMERICA HIMSELF DIDST REQUIRE AID THIS DAY. THOU DIDST THY BEST -- AND THERE BE NO SHAME IN THAT.
I -- I GUESS --
-- SO VIZH, IF YOU CAN DO A WEB SEARCH FOR ANY DATA ON TRIATHLON --
I AM TRACKING SOME INFORMATION FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA, HAWKEYE -- BUT IF YOU CAN WAIT A MOMENT, I'LL MULTI-TASK --
HAS ANYONE TALKED TO WANDA? SHE LOOKED SO MISERABLE AFTER THE FIGHT -- AND SHE JUST HEADED UPSTAIRS THE MINUTE WE GOT BACK --
I'LL TALK TO HER, FIRESTAR. THIS IS DUE TO MY MISTAKE, NOT HERS. WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO DISCOVER WHY SHE CAN CHANNEL WONDER MAN --
-- BUT I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THE EFFECT IT COULD HAVE ON HER...



NEXT: ASSAULT ON FORTRESS MAGNUM! PLUS MORE ON TRIATHLON, SILVERCLAW -- AND EVEN SOME AVENGERS!

MARVEL COMICS
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
the AVENGERS
Moses Magnum means MURDER!
OCT #9
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BUSIEK • PEREZ • VEY
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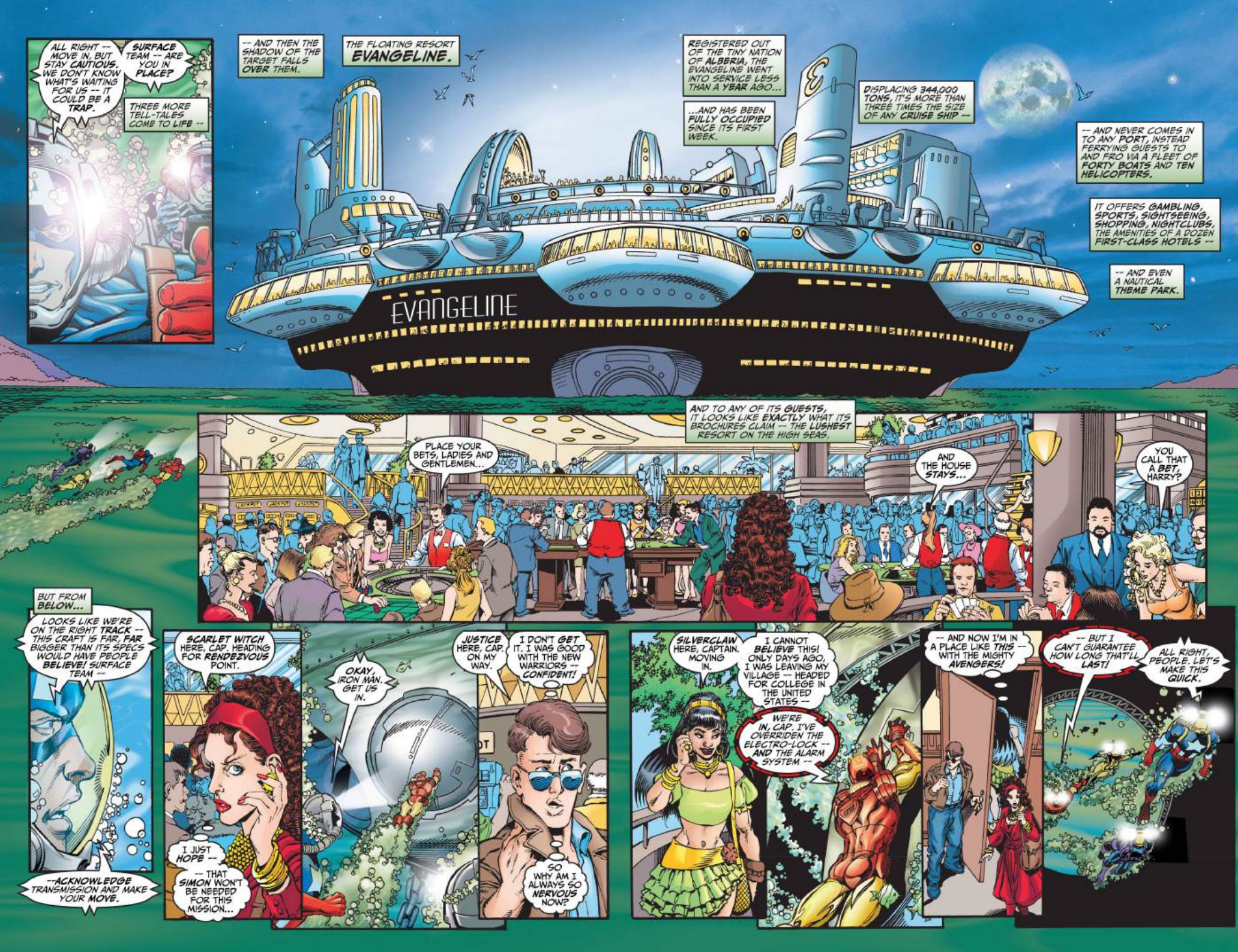
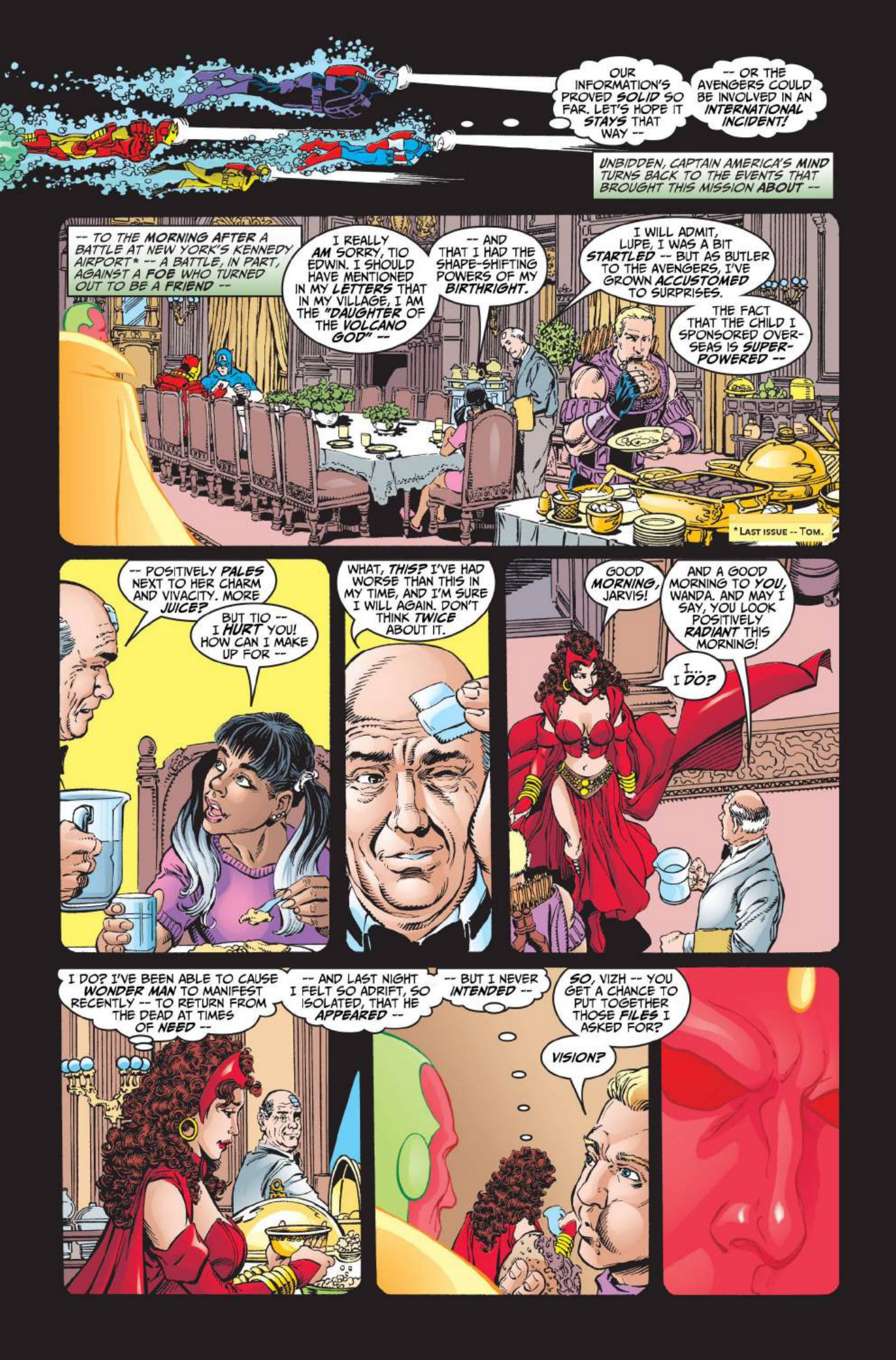

ALL RIGHT -- MOVE IN, BUT STAY CAUTIOUS. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WAITING FOR US -- IT COULD BE A TRAP.
SURFACE TEAM -- ARE YOU IN PLACE?
THREE MORE TELL-TALES COME TO LIFE --
-- AND THEN THE SHADOW OF THE TARGET FALLS OVER THEM.
THE FLOATING RESORT EVANGELINE.
REGISTERED OUT OF THE TINY NATION OF ALBERIA, THE EVANGELINE WENT INTO SERVICE LESS THAN A YEAR AGO...
...AND HAS BEEN FULLY OCCUPIED SINCE ITS FIRST WEEK.
DISPLACING 344,000 TONS, IT'S MORE THAN THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF ANY CRUISE SHIP --
-- AND NEVER COMES IN TO ANY PORT, INSTEAD FERRYING GUESTS TO AND FRO VIA A FLEET OF FORTY BOATS AND TEN HELICOPTERS.
IT OFFERS GAMBLING, SPORTS, SIGHTSEEING, SHOPPING, NIGHTCLUBS, THE AMENITIES OF A DOZEN FIRST-CLASS HOTELS --
-- AND EVEN A NAUTICAL THEME PARK.
EVANGELINE
AND TO ANY OF ITS GUESTS, IT LOOKS LIKE EXACTLY WHAT ITS BROCHURES CLAIM -- THE LUSHEST RESORT ON THE HIGH SEAS.
PLACE YOUR BETS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
AND THE HOUSE STAYS...
YOU CALL THAT A BET, HARRY?
BUT FROM BELOW...
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK -- THIS CRAFT IS FAR, FAR BIGGER THAN ITS SPECS WOULD HAVE PEOPLE BELIEVE! SURFACE TEAM --
--ACKNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION AND MAKE YOUR MOVE.
SCARLET WITCH HERE, CAP. HEADING FOR RENDEZVOUS POINT.
I JUST HOPE --
-- THAT SIMON WON'T BE NEEDED FOR THIS MISSION...
OKAY, IRON MAN. GET US IN.
JUSTICE HERE, CAP. ON MY WAY.
I DON'T GET IT. I WAS GOOD WITH THE NEW WARRIORS -- CONFIDENT!
SO WHY AM I ALWAYS SO NERVOUS NOW?
SILVERCLAW HERE, CAPTAIN. MOVING IN.
I CANNOT BELIEVE THIS! ONLY DAYS AGO, I WAS LEAVING MY VILLAGE -- HEADED FOR COLLEGE IN THE UNITED STATES --
WE'RE IN, CAP. I'VE OVERRIDEN THE ELECTRO-LOCK -- AND THE ALARM SYSTEM --
-- AND NOW I'M IN A PLACE LIKE THIS -- WITH THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
-- BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE HOW LONG THAT'LL LAST!
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE. LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK.

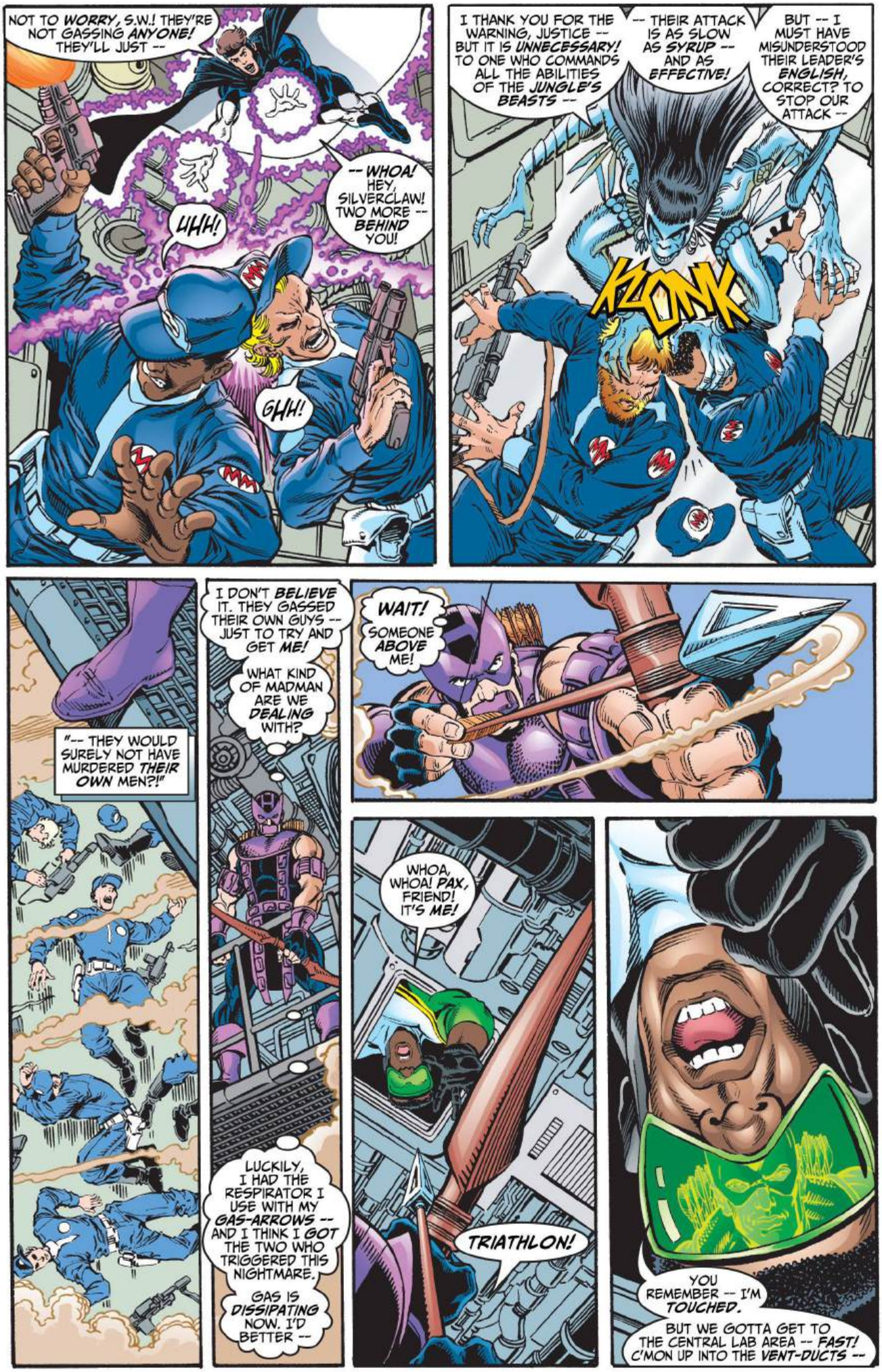

OUR INFORMATION'S PROVED SOLID SO FAR. LET'S HOPE IT STAYS THAT WAY --
-- OR THE AVENGERS COULD BE INVOLVED IN AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT!
UNBIDDEN, CAPTAIN AMERICA'S MIND TURNS BACK TO THE EVENTS THAT BROUGHT THIS MISSION ABOUT --
-- TO THE MORNING AFTER A BATTLE AT NEW YORK'S KENNEDY AIRPORT* -- A BATTLE, IN PART, AGAINST A FOE WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A FRIEND --
I REALLY AM SORRY, TIO EDWIN. I SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED IN MY LETTERS THAT IN MY VILLAGE, I AM THE "DAUGHTER OF THE VOLCANO GOD" --
-- AND THAT I HAD THE SHAPE-SHIFTING POWERS OF MY BIRTHRIGHT.
I WILL ADMIT, LUPE, I WAS A BIT STARTLED -- BUT AS BUTLER TO THE AVENGERS, I'VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO SURPRISES.
THE FACT THAT THE CHILD I SPONSORED OVERSEAS IS SUPER-POWERED --
*LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
-- POSITIVELY PALES NEXT TO HER CHARM AND VIVACITY. MORE JUICE?
BUT TIO -- I HURT YOU! HOW CAN I MAKE UP FOR --
WHAT, THIS? I'VE HAD WORSE THAN THIS IN MY TIME, AND I'M SURE I WILL AGAIN. DON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT IT.
GOOD MORNING, JARVIS!
AND A GOOD MORNING TO YOU, WANDA. AND MAY I SAY, YOU LOOK POSITIVELY RADIANT THIS MORNING!
I... I DO?
I DO? I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CAUSE WONDER MAN TO MANIFEST RECENTLY -- TO RETURN FROM THE DEAD AT TIMES OF NEED --
-- AND LAST NIGHT I FELT SO ADRIFT, SO ISOLATED, THAT HE APPEARED --
-- BUT I NEVER INTENDED --
SO, VIZH -- YOU GET A CHANCE TO PUT TOGETHER THOSE FILES I ASKED FOR?
VISION?

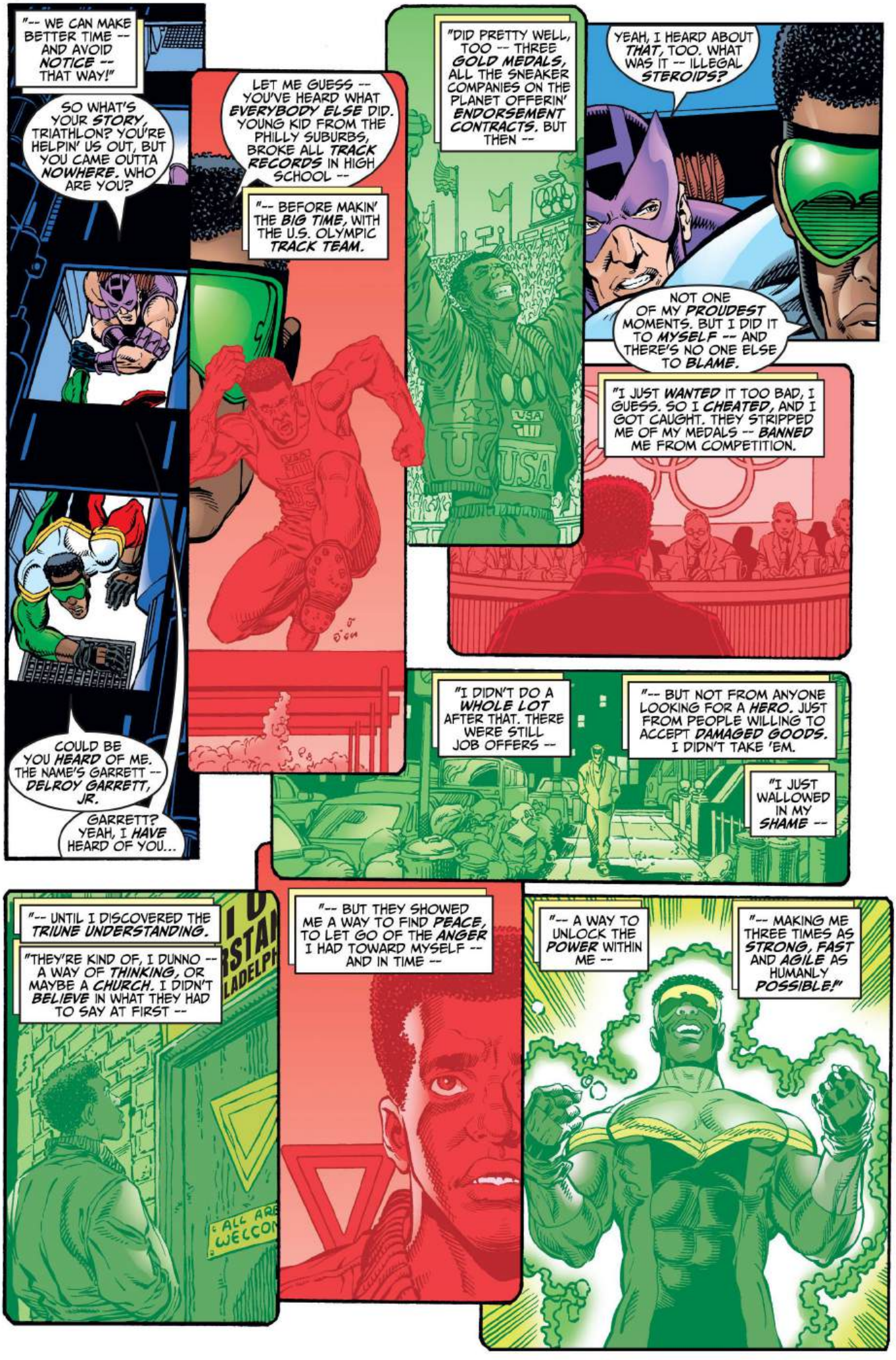
HM? OH -- YES, HAWKEYE. I TRANSMITTED THEM TO YOUR MAIL ACCOUNT.
THANKS, VIZH. LOOK, LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHIN', OKAY?
I'M FEELIN' KINDA LIKE A FIFTH WHEEL, WHAT WITH GOIN' BACK TO PLAYIN' SOLDIER-BOY AFTER BEIN' A TEAM LEADER SO LONG.
I MEAN, DON'T GET ME WRONG, IT'S OKAY -- CAP'S A GOOD LEADER, AND IT'S FINE. IT'S JUST SORTA... CONFININ', AN' I WAS THINKIN' --
VIZH?
OH, BOY -- BREAKFAST!
YOU COULD HAVE EATEN AT HOME, VANCE...
SURE, ANGEL -- IF I WANTED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE MOLDY YOGURT AND THE STALE HOSTESS SNO-BALL IN NITA'S FRIDGE. YOU WANT SOMETHING?
AH, MAYBE A PIECE OF FRUIT. YOU GO AHEAD --
"-- I'LL BE OVER WITH WANDA."
AH -- HI, WANDA. CAN I -- UM -- TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING?
SURE, FIRESTAR -- OF COURSE. HAVE A SEAT.
SO WHAT IS IT? IF THERE'S ANY WAY I CAN HELP...
I DON'T KNOW IF ANY-ONE CAN HELP. IT'S -- WELL -- THE THING IS --
OH, I HATE THIS. I'M JUST GOING TO COME OUT AND SAY IT.
MY POWERS ARE MICROWAVE-BASED AND WHEN I USE THEM AT HIGH LEVELS I RUN THE RISK OF RADIATION POISONING, OF STERILITY.
I'M NOT HIDING IT -- I'VE TOLD CAP -- BUT WHEN I DO THINGS LIKE POWER UP THAT DIMENSIONAL PORTAL,* IT SCARES ME --
-- AND I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE, BUT IF I HAVE TO DO MORE STUFF LIKE THAT, I --
*IN #7 --TOM.
NO WONDER YOU'RE SCARED. IN YOUR PLACE, I'D BE TERRIFIED.
BUT LOOK, MAYBE THINGS AREN'T AS BAD AS THEY SEEM. GIVE ME A DAY OR TWO TO THINK, AND MAYBE I CAN SUGGEST SOMETHING...

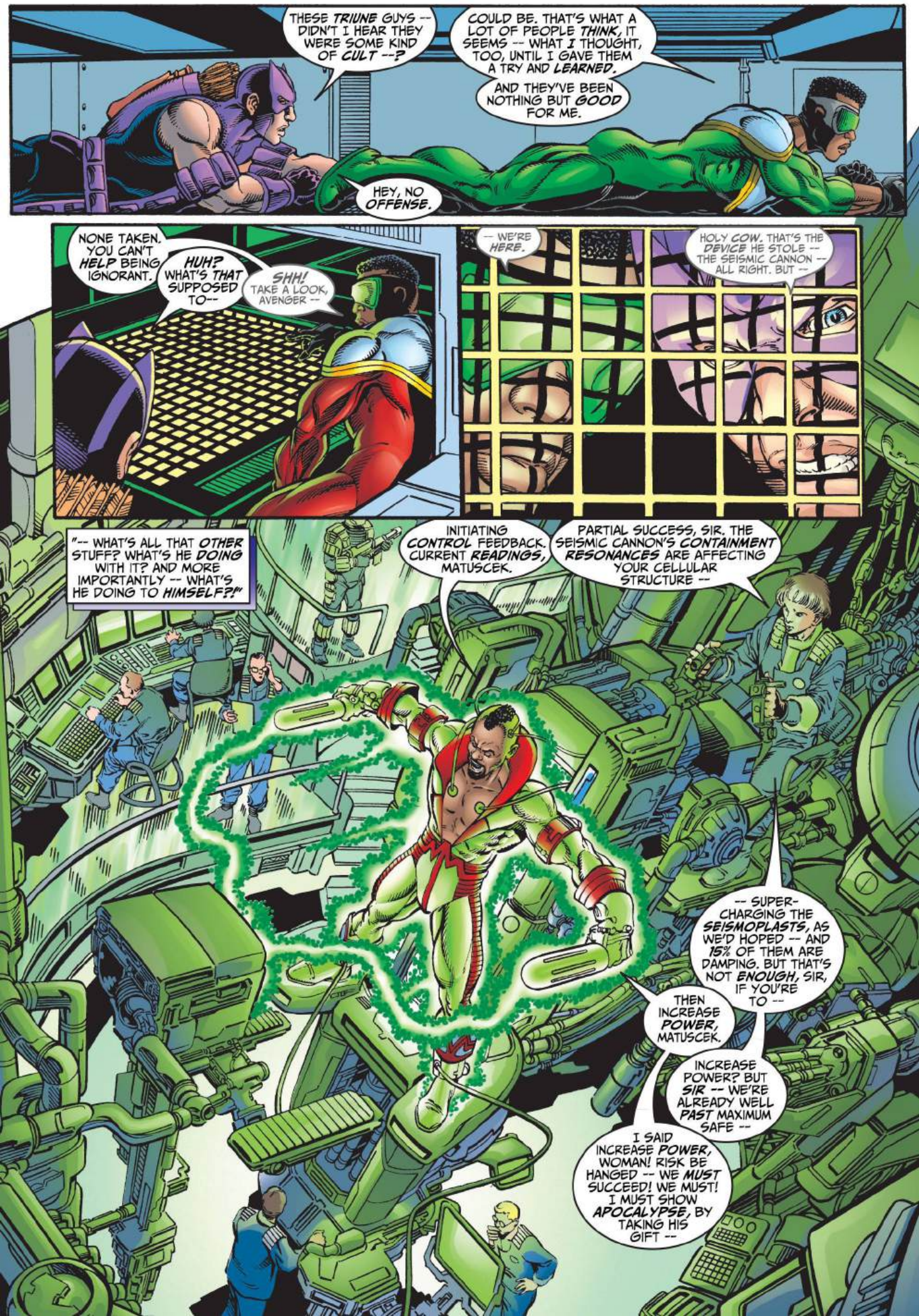
AND THEN...
HM. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL HERE.
IF I COULD HAVE EVERYONE'S ATTENTION FOR A FEW MINUTES...
AH, LUPE -- PERHAPS WE SHOULD RETIRE TO ANOTHER ROOM. THIS IS AVENGERS BUSINESS, AND --
WHAT? BUT I WANTED TO HEAR --
LET HER STAY, JARVIS. WITH THE VISION LIMITED TO HOLOGRAM FORM WHILE UNDERGOING REPAIR AND THOR ABSENT, WE COULD USE AN EXTRA HAND.
BESIDES, SHE WAS IN THIS FIGHT BEFORE WE WERE -- SHE HAS A RIGHT TO FINISH IT.
AND HAVING FOUGHT HER -- I CAN ATTEST TO HER COMPETENCE.
WELL -- I SUPPOSE -- I MEAN -- SHE IS OLDER THAN MISS FIRESTAR...
OH, THANK YOU, CAPTAIN! THANK YOU! YOU WON'T REGRET THIS -- I PROMISE YOU!
OH, I DON'T EXPECT TO, LUPE -- NOT WITH THESE BRUISES. BUT BACK TO BUSINESS -- HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR.
MOSES MAGNUM, ARMS DEALER AND INTERNATIONAL ECO-TERRORIST, SMUGGLED HIS MEN ONTO A PLANE IN COSTA VERDE YESTERDAY --
-- IN ORDER TO INTERCEPT ANOTHER PLANE AT KENNEDY AIRPORT, CARRYING AN EXPERIMENTAL DEVICE CALLED THE SEISMIC CANNON.
THE SEISMIC CANNON WAS DESIGNED BY RAND-MEACHUM TO CONTROL AND AMELIORATE THE TECTONIC FORCES THAT CAUSE EARTHQUAKES --
-- AND SINCE MAGNUM'S BEEN CONNECTED WITH EARTHQUAKE THREATS BEFORE, WE HAVE TO TREAT THIS VERY SERIOUSLY.
ANY QUESTIONS?
BREEPBREEPBREEPBREEPBREEPBREEPBREEP
EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN -- BUT WE'RE RECEIVING AN ALERT MESSAGE.
IT'S COMING IN ON OUR EPSILON FREQUENCY. I'LL PUT IT ON VIDEO.

EPSILON FREQUENCY? BUT THAT'S ONLY FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS!
WHO COULD -- TRIATHLON?!
HOWDY, AVENGERS -- SORRY ABOUT BREAKIN' IN ON YOUR PRIVATE WAVEBANDS HERE, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO FIND A PAY PHONE!
I STOWED AWAY ON THAT PLANE MAGNUM STOLE* -- AND TRACKED HIM TO HIS LAIR. BUT THINGS ARE GETTING OUT OF HAND HERE!
* LAST ISSUE -- TOM.
SORRY ABOUT BREAKING IN ON OUR WAVEBANDS? HOW DOES HE EVEN KNOW OUR COMM-SYSTEMS? WE ONLY MET HIM YESTERDAY!
HOLD IT, TRIATHLON. LET'S START WITH --
START, NOTHING! MAGNUM'S A MAJOR LEAGUE LOONY-TUNE! HE KEEPS TALKING ABOUT SOMEONE NAMED APOCALYPSE --
-- AND HOW HE'LL SHOW HIM CHAOS, AND MILLIONS OF PEOPLE DEAD!
AND WHATEVER HE'S UP TO, IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S COMIN' SOON!
ALL RIGHT. GIVE US YOUR LOCATION, TRIATHLON --
"-- WE'LL BE THERE AS SOON AS WE CAN."
WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS TRIATHLON -- BUT WE'VE GOT TO TAKE HIS WARNING SERIOUSLY.
THE X-MEN FILLED US IN ON APOCALYPSE -- HE'S A MUTANT HARDNOSE, FASCINATED WITH NATURAL SELECTION, WITH THE SURVIVAL OF THE STRONG.
ANYTHING HE'S MIXED UP IN COULD BE VERY BAD NEWS.
SO WE GOT HERE, AND WAITED UNTIL DARK, AS TRIATHLON SUGGESTED.
AND NOW...
QUE --?
THE HATCH? BUT --
EXCUSE ME, GENTS --
WHAK
KRAK
KLUD

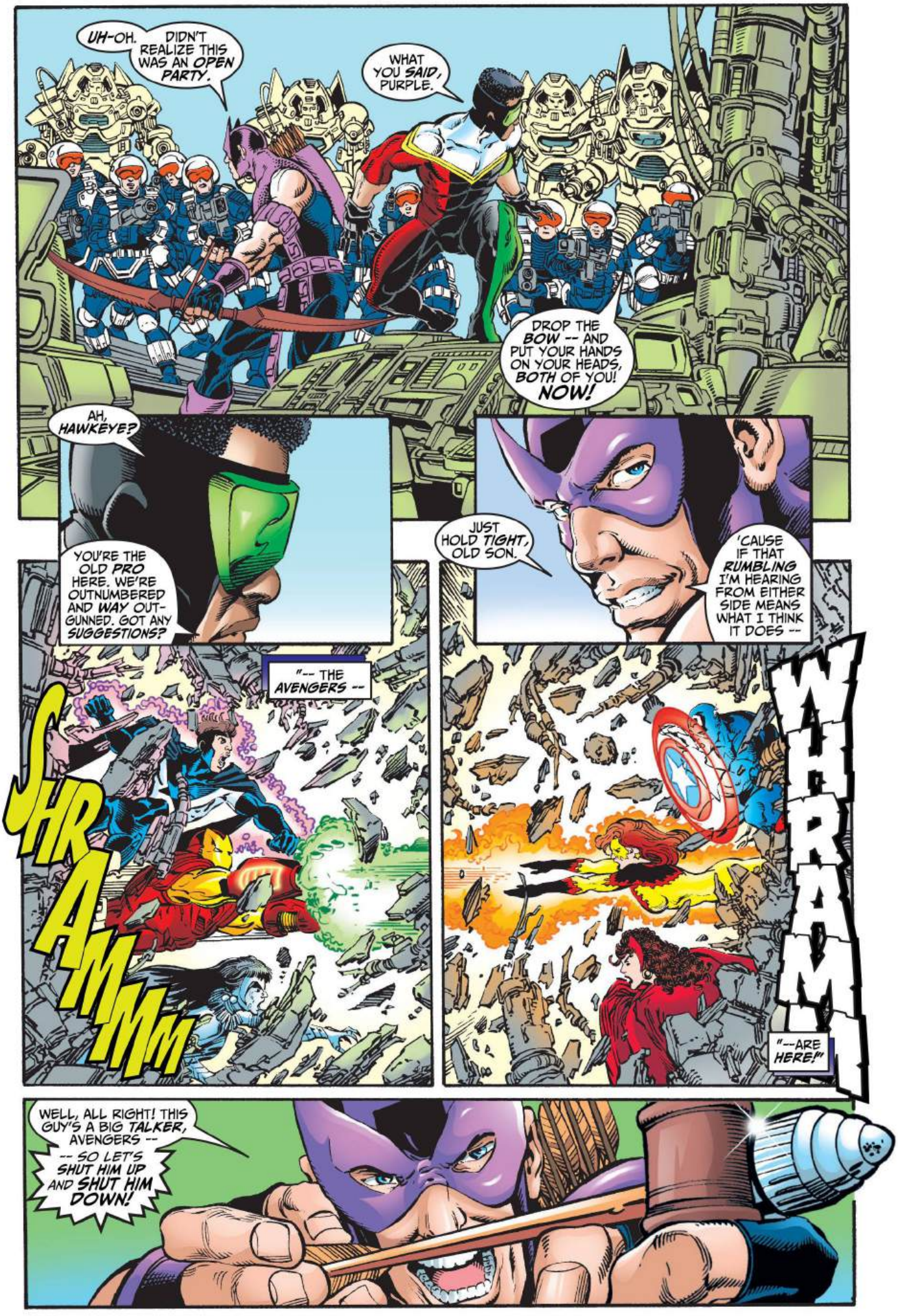
-- BUT I'D LIKE TO HAVE A WORD -- A PRIVATE WORD -- WITH YOUR BOSS!
WE DON'T HAVE A PRAYER OF MAKING IT TO MAGNUM UNNOTICED -- BUT WE'VE GOT TO KEEP THE ALARM FROM BEING RAISED AS LONG AS WE CAN!
I HOPE THE OTHERS ARE DOING OKAY...
TO THE EAST...
KILL HIM! KILL THE INTRU -- UUUH!
THESE JOKERS ARE CALLED THE MAGNUM SHELLS, I THINK -- I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE AT THEM BEFORE. THEY'RE TOUGH, BUT NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.
STILL, THEIR PRESENCE PROVES ONE THING -- TRIATHLON DIDN'T STEER US WRONG. THE EVANGELINE IS DEFINITELY A MAGNUM OPERATION!
TO THE SOUTH...
ALL RIGHT, FELLAS -- NOBODY DOES ANYTHING STUPID, NOBODY GETS HURT!
WELL, EXCEPT MAYBE ME, THAT IS.
A DAY OR TWO TO THINK, AND MAYBE SHE CAN SUGGEST SOMETHING. I WONDER WHAT SHE -- BUT I CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW.
GOT TO CONCENTRATE ON THESE GUYS -- MAKE SURE NOBODY SLIPS AWAY!
AND, SEVERAL DECKS ABOVE...
THE MONITOR BOARD -- LIT UP LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE, SHOWING MULTIPLE DISRUPTIONS! WE'RE BEING INVADED -- FROM BELOW!
JORGE, ROBERT -- QUICKLY! FLOOD THE LOWER DECKS WITH NERVE GAS -- LET THE INVADERS CHOKE ON THEIR OWN --
HUH? WH-WHAT'S GOING --?
THAT, SIR, IS A MUTANT HEX, DISRUPTING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, COURTESY OF THE SCARLET WITCH! AND THIS --
-- IS AN ELBOW SMASH!
AS FOR THE REST OF YOUR SQUAD --


NOT TO WORRY, S.W.! THEY'RE NOT GASSING ANYONE! THEY'LL JUST --
-- WHOA! HEY, SILVERCLAW! TWO MORE -- BEHIND YOU!
UHH!
GHH!
I THANK YOU FOR THE WARNING, JUSTICE -- BUT IT IS UNNECESSARY! TO ONE WHO COMMANDS ALL THE ABILITIES OF THE JUNGLE'S BEASTS --
-- THEIR ATTACK IS AS SLOW AS SYRUP -- AND AS EFFECTIVE!
BUT -- I MUST HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD THEIR LEADER'S ENGLISH, CORRECT? TO STOP OUR ATTACK --
KLONK
"-- THEY WOULD SURELY NOT HAVE MURDERED THEIR OWN MEN?!"
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. THEY GASSED THEIR OWN GUYS -- JUST TO TRY AND GET ME!
WHAT KIND OF MADMAN ARE WE DEALING WITH?
LUCKILY, I HAD THE RESPIRATOR I USE WITH MY GAS-ARROWS -- AND I THINK I GOT THE TWO WHO TRIGGERED THIS NIGHTMARE.
GAS IS DISSIPATING NOW. I'D BETTER --
WAIT! SOMEONE ABOVE ME!
WHOA, WHOA! PAX, FRIEND! IT'S ME!
TRIATHLON!
YOU REMEMBER -- I'M TOUCHED.
BUT WE GOTTA GET TO THE CENTRAL LAB AREA -- FAST! C'MON UP INTO THE VENT-DUCTS --

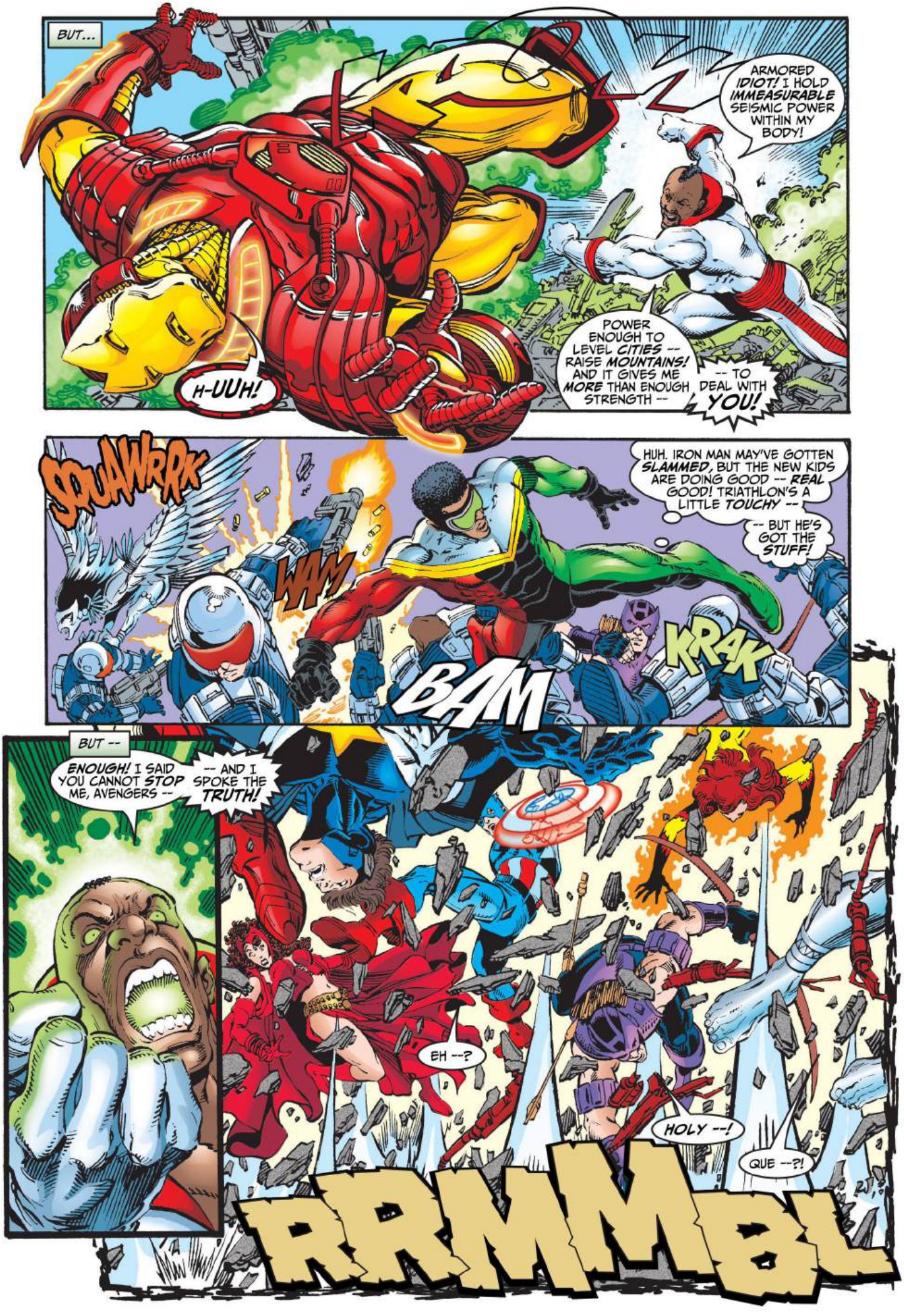

"-- WE CAN MAKE BETTER TIME -- AND AVOID NOTICE -- THAT WAY!"
SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY, TRIATHLON? YOU'RE HELPIN' US OUT, BUT YOU CAME OUTTA NOWHERE. WHO ARE YOU?
COULD BE YOU HEARD OF ME. THE NAME'S GARRETT -- DELROY GARRETT, JR.
GARRETT? YEAH, I HAVE HEARD OF YOU...
LET ME GUESS -- YOU'VE HEARD WHAT EVERYBODY ELSE DID. YOUNG KID FROM THE PHILLY SUBURBS, BROKE ALL TRACK RECORDS IN HIGH SCHOOL --
"-- BEFORE MAKIN' THE BIG TIME, WITH THE U.S. OLYMPIC TRACK TEAM.
"DID PRETTY WELL, TOO -- THREE GOLD MEDALS, ALL THE SNEAKER COMPANIES ON THE PLANET OFFERIN' ENDORSEMENT CONTRACTS. BUT THEN --
YEAH, I HEARD ABOUT THAT, TOO. WHAT WAS IT -- ILLEGAL STEROIDS?
NOT ONE OF MY PROUDEST MOMENTS. BUT I DID IT TO MYSELF -- AND THERE'S NO ONE ELSE TO BLAME.
"I JUST WANTED IT TOO BAD, I GUESS. SO I CHEATED, AND I GOT CAUGHT. THEY STRIPPED ME OF MY MEDALS -- BANNED ME FROM COMPETITION.
"I DIDN'T DO A WHOLE LOT AFTER THAT. THERE WERE STILL JOB OFFERS --
"-- BUT NOT FROM ANYONE LOOKING FOR A HERO. JUST FROM PEOPLE WILLING TO ACCEPT DAMAGED GOODS. I DIDN'T TAKE 'EM.
"I JUST WALLOWED IN MY SHAME --
"-- UNTIL I DISCOVERED THE TRIUNE UNDERSTANDING.
"THEY'RE KIND OF, I DUNNO -- A WAY OF THINKING, OR MAYBE A CHURCH. I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY AT FIRST --
"-- BUT THEY SHOWED ME A WAY TO FIND PEACE, TO LET GO OF THE ANGER I HAD TOWARD MYSELF -- AND IN TIME --
"-- A WAY TO UNLOCK THE POWER WITHIN ME --
"-- MAKING ME THREE TIMES AS STRONG, FAST AND AGILE AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE!"


THESE TRIUNE GUYS -- DIDN'T I HEAR THEY WERE SOME KIND OF CULT --?
COULD BE. THAT'S WHAT A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK, IT SEEMS -- WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO, UNTIL I GAVE THEM A TRY AND LEARNED.
AND THEY'VE BEEN NOTHING BUT GOOD FOR ME.
HEY, NO OFFENSE.
NONE TAKEN. YOU CAN'T HELP BEING IGNORANT.
HUH? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO--
SHH! TAKE A LOOK, AVENGER --
-- WE'RE HERE.
HOLY COW. THAT'S THE DEVICE HE STOLE -- THE SEISMIC CANNON -- ALL RIGHT. BUT --
"-- WHAT'S ALL THAT OTHER STUFF? WHAT'S HE DOING WITH IT? AND MORE IMPORTANTLY -- WHAT'S HE DOING TO HIMSELF?!"
INITIATING CONTROL FEEDBACK. CURRENT READINGS, MATUSCEK.
PARTIAL SUCCESS, SIR. THE SEISMIC CANNON'S CONTAINMENT RESONANCES ARE AFFECTING YOUR CELLULAR STRUCTURE --
-- SUPER-CHARGING THE SEISMOPLASTS, AS WE'D HOPED -- AND 15% OF THEM ARE DAMPING. BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH, SIR, IF YOU'RE TO --
THEN INCREASE POWER, MATUSCEK.
INCREASE POWER? BUT SIR -- WE'RE ALREADY WELL PAST MAXIMUM SAFE --
I SAID INCREASE POWER, WOMAN! RISK BE HANGED -- WE MUST SUCCEED! WE MUST! I MUST SHOW APOCALYPSE, BY TAKING HIS GIFT --

-- AND TURNING IT INTO A WEAPON -- A WEAPON THAT WILL STAGGER EVEN SUCH AS HE --
-- WITH AN UNBRIDLED DISPLAY OF SHEER DESTRUCTIVE FORCE!
SO WHAT'S HE TALKIN' ABOUT?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT THIS IS THE SORT OF THING HE WAS SAYING BEFORE -- THIS IS WHY I CONTACTED THE AVENGERS.
GOOD CALL. BUT WE'D BETTER WAIT UNTIL THE OTHERS ARE IN POS--
RTCHMMM
--SAMMM!
WH --!
HEADS UP, TRIATH -- WE'RE RUMBLED! LOOKS LIKE OUR BUDDY OVER THERE SKIMPED ON THE BUDGET FOR HIS VENTILATION DUCTS!
ON THE CONTRARY, HAWKEYE. YOUR ENTRANCE WAS QUITE DELIBERATE -- AND ENTIRELY UNDER MY CONTROL.
NICE TRY, MAGS. BUT STRAPPED INTO THAT TORTURE DEVICE LIKE THAT -- THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD'VE KNOWN WE WERE HERE!
YOUR IGNORANCE IS APPALLING, ARCHER.
TO ONE AS ATTUNED TO SEISMIC VIBRATIONS AS I -- YOUR WHISPERS RESOUNDED LIKE THUNDER!
YOU KNOW -- THAT'S THE SECOND TIME I'VE BEEN CALLED IGNORANT IN AS MANY MINUTES, GLOW-BOY -- AN' I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL SLIGHTED!
LET'S TAKE 'IM, TRIATHLON!
YOU WILL TAKE NOTHING, AVENGER! GUARDS --
-- SUBDUE THEM!

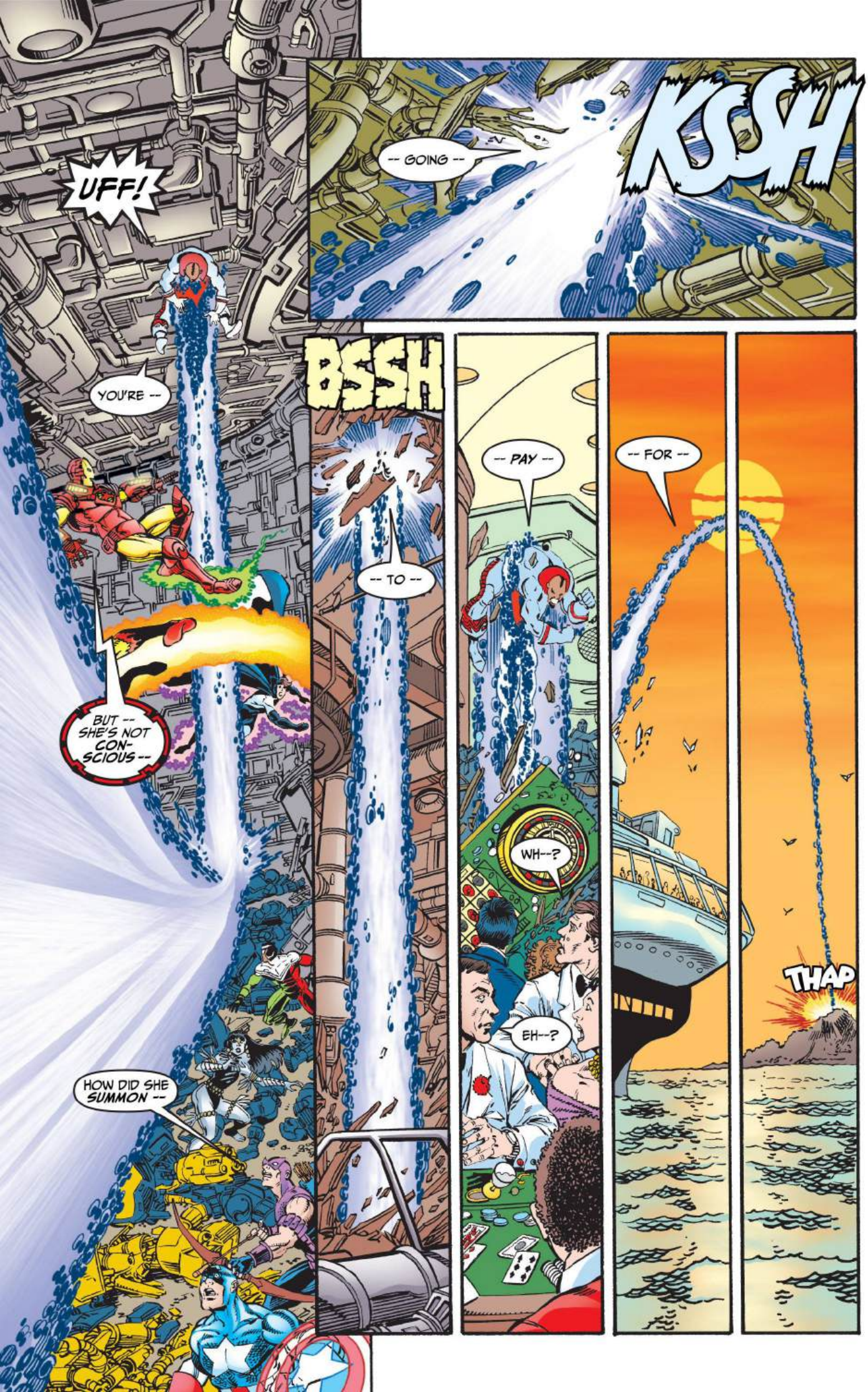

UH-OH.
DIDN'T REALIZE THIS WAS AN OPEN PARTY.
WHAT YOU SAID, PURPLE.
DROP THE BOW -- AND PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEADS, BOTH OF YOU! NOW!
AH, HAWKEYE?
YOU'RE THE OLD PRO HERE. WE'RE OUTNUMBERED AND WAY OUT-GUNNED. GOT ANY SUGGESTIONS?
JUST HOLD TIGHT, OLD SON.
'CAUSE IF THAT RUMBLING I'M HEARING FROM EITHER SIDE MEANS WHAT I THINK IT DOES --
"-- THE AVENGERS --
SHRAMMM
WHRAM
"--ARE HERE!"
WELL, ALL RIGHT! THIS GUY'S A BIG TALKER, AVENGERS --
-- SO LET'S SHUT HIM UP AND SHUT HIM DOWN!

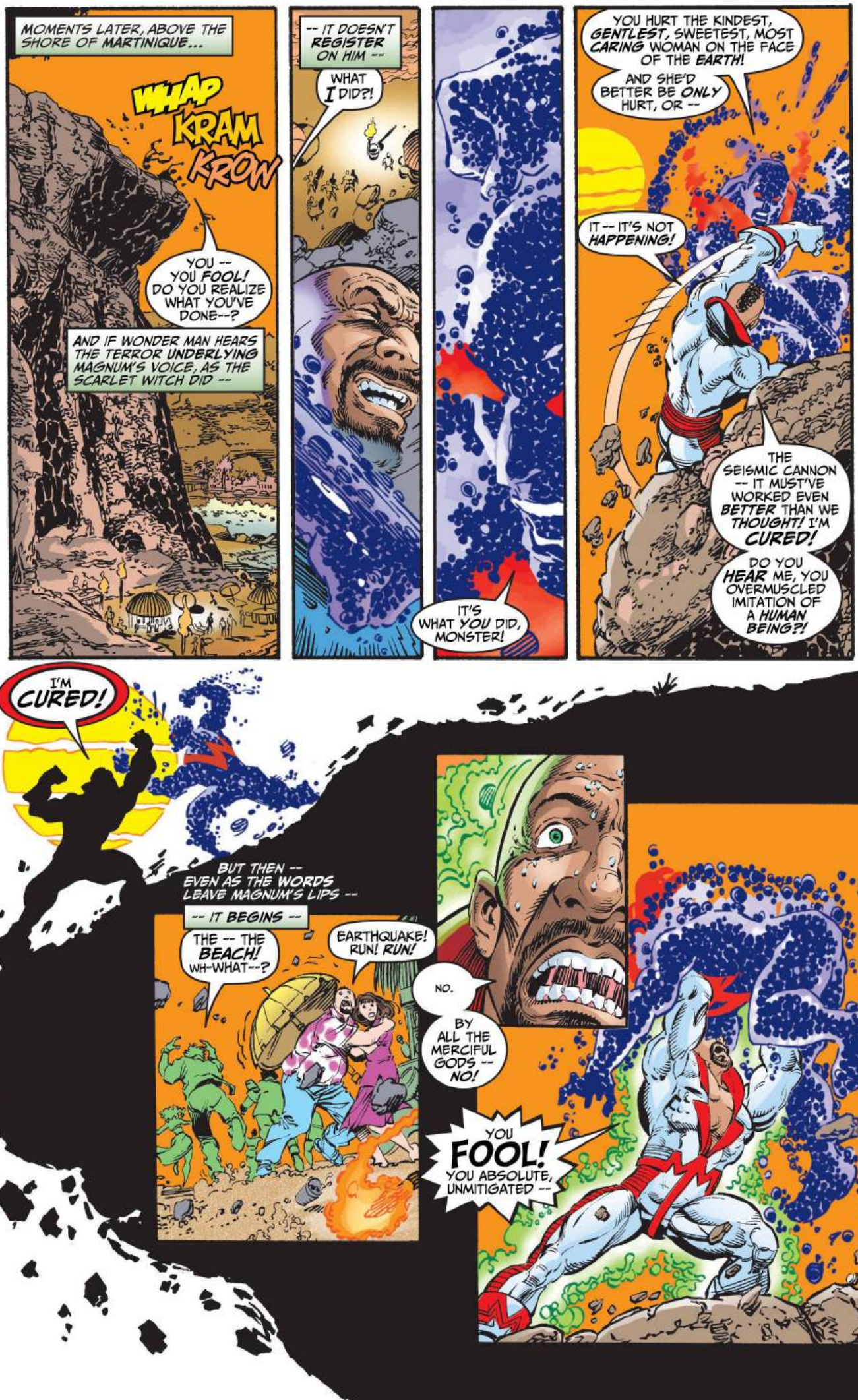
WHOMM
FOOLS!
YOU WON'T STOP ME -- YOU CAN'T STOP ME! I HAVE A MESSAGE TO SEND -- AND NOTHING WILL PREVENT IT!
YOU WANT TO SEND A MESSAGE, FELLA -- TRY WESTERN UNION!
IRON MAN! WITH THOR NOT HERE, YOU'RE OUR HEAVY HITTER! YOU TAKE MAGNUM --
-- THE REST OF US WILL BLOCK FOR YOU!
I KNOW WHAT CAP'S DOING. IRON MAN'S OUR HEAVY HITTER, BUT WONDER MAN'S STRONGER -- IF I'D JUST BRING HIM THROUGH!
CAP KNOWS THAT I DON'T WANT TO DO IT -- THAT NOT KNOWING HOW I'M LINKED WITH SIMON, OR WHY -- THAT IT MAKES ME NERVOUS!
I SHOULD JUST GET PAST IT -- DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. BUT AFTER LAST NIGHT --
-- I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I SHOULD BE GLAD I CAN CONJURE SIMON -- OR SCARED!
KRANG
HAH! MY CROCODILE ASPECT IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH YOU, MERCENARIES!
SO DO AS CAPTAIN AMERICA WISHES -- AND FALL!
WHAT THE LADY SAID, GUYS!
SETTLE DOWN, VANCE -- YOU CAN TAKE 'EM. YOU ARE TAKING 'EM.
"SETTLE DOWN."
NOW, IRON MAN! YOU'RE CLEAR -- DO IT!
PLOW


BUT...
H-UUH!
ARMORED IDIOT! I HOLD IMMEASURABLE SEISMIC POWER WITHIN MY BODY!
POWER ENOUGH TO LEVEL CITIES -- RAISE MOUNTAINS! AND IT GIVES ME MORE THAN ENOUGH STRENGTH --
-- TO DEAL WITH YOU!
SQUAWRRK
WAM
BAM
KRAK
HUH. IRON MAN MAY'VE GOTTEN SLAMMED, BUT THE NEW KIDS ARE DOING GOOD -- REAL GOOD! TRIATHLON'S A LITTLE TOUCHY --
-- BUT HE'S GOT THE STUFF!
BUT --
ENOUGH! I SAID YOU CANNOT STOP ME, AVENGERS --
-- AND I SPOKE THE TRUTH!
EH --?
HOLY --!
QUE --?!
RRMMBL

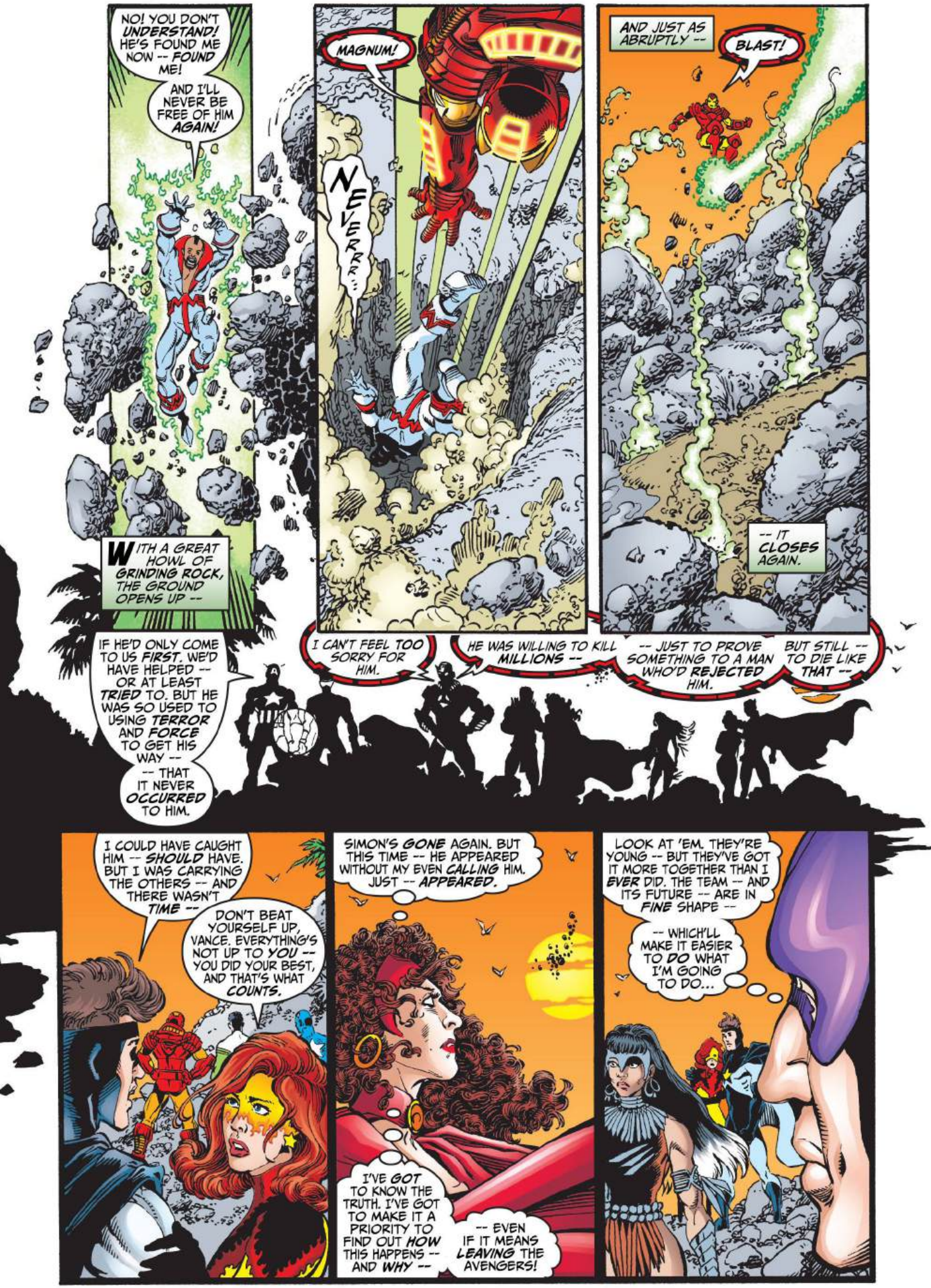
THE SEISMIC CANNON WORKED! IT'S INCREASED MY CONTROL -- EXTENDED IT! I CAN TAP INTO THE VERY ENERGIES OF THE EARTH --
-- AND UNLEASH THEM WHEREVER I CHOOSE! AND TO PROVE IT, I CHOOSE TO DESTROY THE EASTERN SEABOARD OF THE UNITED STATES --
-- RIGHT NOW!
NO --
STOP --
BUT--!
WH- WHAT?!
SOMETHING -- BLOCKING MY POWER -- PREVENTING ME FROM UNLEASHING IT! BUT WHAT--?
THAT WOULD BE ME, MAGNUM.
WANDA? BUT HOW--?
YOU MENTIONED THE EARTH'S ENERGIES, MAGNUM! AND I'VE BEEN TAPPING INTO ENERGY-FIELDS LATELY -- THOUGH I DON'T KNOW HOW!
MORGAN LE FAY'S MAGICK -- MOONGLOW'S -- THE CORRUPTOR'S ENERGIES!*
*IN #3, #5 AND #6, RESPECTIVELY -- TOM.
NO--!
POWER -- LEAVING ME --
NOW I'M DOING IT CONSCIOUSLY -- FOR THE FIRST TIME! I CAN FEEL YOUR CONNECTION TO THE EARTH -- AND I CAN BLOCK IT!
CAN'T -- WON'T BE -- STOPPED! PRICE IS -- TOO HIGH --
POUR IT ON, WITCHIE!
I'M DOING IT! I'M BEATING HIM -- WITHOUT SIMON! I'M BEATING HIM!
PRICE IS --

--TOO HIGH!
WANDA!
WANDA MAXIMOFF THROWS UP HER HANDS TO DEFEND HERSELF, BUT IT'S TOO LATE -- AND HER LAST CONSCIOUS THOUGHT --
WANDA!
-- IS TO WONDER WHAT MAGNUM'S SO SCARED OF --
WANDA!
I TRIED TO BLAST THE MACHINE -- VAPORIZE IT! BUT --
WANDA! ARE YOU--?
AND THUS SHALL FALL ALL WHO OPPOSE --
BUT FROM THE SLUMPED, UNMOVING FORM --
EH--?
MMMAGNUMMM...
W-WONDER MAN?
MAGNUM!


UFF!
-- GOING --
KSSH
YOU'RE --
BSSH
-- TO --
-- PAY --
-- FOR --
BUT -- SHE'S NOT CON- SCIOUS --
WH--?
EH--?
THAP
HOW DID SHE SUMMON --


MOMENTS LATER, ABOVE THE SHORE OF MARTINIQUE...
WHAP
KRAM
KROW
YOU -- YOU FOOL! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE--?
AND IF WONDER MAN HEARS THE TERROR UNDERLYING MAGNUM'S VOICE, AS THE SCARLET WITCH DID --
-- IT DOESN'T REGISTER ON HIM --
WHAT I DID?!
IT'S WHAT YOU DID, MONSTER!
YOU HURT THE KINDEST, GENTLEST, SWEETEST, MOST CARING WOMAN ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH!
AND SHE'D BETTER BE ONLY HURT, OR --
IT -- IT'S NOT HAPPENING!
THE SEISMIC CANNON -- IT MUST'VE WORKED EVEN BETTER THAN WE THOUGHT! I'M CURED!
DO YOU HEAR ME, YOU OVERMUSCLED IMITATION OF A HUMAN BEING?!
I'M CURED!
BUT THEN -- EVEN AS THE WORDS LEAVE MAGNUM'S LIPS --
-- IT BEGINS --
THE -- THE BEACH! WH-WHAT--?
EARTHQUAKE! RUN! RUN!
NO.
BY ALL THE MERCIFUL GODS -- NO!
YOU FOOL! YOU ABSOLUTE, UNMITIGATED --

-- FOOL!
OH, LORD -- I'VE GOT TO FLEE -- GOT TO GET OFF-ISLAND! GET BACK TO THE EVANGELINE -- BEFORE --
-- BEFORE --
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, MAGNUM. NOT 'TIL WE'RE DONE WITH YOU.
IT'S APOCALYPSE -- APOCALYPSE! THIS IS HIS CURSE -- HIS PUNISHMENT!
IT WAS HE WHO RESCUED ME FROM CERTAIN DEATH -- GAVE ME POWER OVER THE EARTH, IF I'D ACT AS HIS AGENT, ONE OF HIS CHAOS-BRINGERS!*
BUT I FAILED HIM -- FIRST AGAINST THE X-MEN -- AND THEN AGAINST THE BLACK PANTHER AND DEATHLOK!**
HE LET ME KEEP THE POWER, BUT TOOK MY CONTROL OF IT --
-- SO THAT EVERY TIME I TOUCHED SOLID GROUND --
-- THE QUAKES WOULD COME!
I HAD TO HIDE FROM HIM -- STAY AWAY FROM LAND, ON THE EVANGELINE! THAT'S WHY I NEEDED THE SEISMIC CANNON --
-- TO OVERCOME THE CURSE -- CHANNEL THE POWER INTO SOMETHING I COULD WIN BACK HIS FAVOR WITH --
THE WHOLE ISLAND'S SHAKING, MAGNUM -- AND YOU'RE THE EPICENTER!
WHAT'S HAPPENING -- WHAT'S CAUSING THIS?
WELL, THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
LET US HELP YOU, MAGNUM -- WE'LL GET YOU BACK TO THE EVANGELINE, SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT THIS "CURSE" --
*After Power Man Annual #1, as seen in Classic X-Men #25. **In Uncanny X-Men #119, and Deathlok #22-25. -- Tom


NO! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! HE'S FOUND ME NOW -- FOUND ME!
AND I'LL NEVER BE FREE OF HIM AGAIN!
MAGNUM!
NEVERR...
AND JUST AS ABRUPTLY --
BLAST!
-- IT CLOSES AGAIN.
WITH A GREAT HOWL OF GRINDING ROCK, THE GROUND OPENS UP --
I CAN'T FEEL TOO SORRY FOR HIM.
HE WAS WILLING TO KILL MILLIONS --
-- JUST TO PROVE SOMETHING TO A MAN WHO'D REJECTED HIM.
BUT STILL -- TO DIE LIKE THAT --
IF HE'D ONLY COME TO US FIRST. WE'D HAVE HELPED -- OR AT LEAST TRIED TO. BUT HE WAS SO USED TO USING TERROR AND FORCE TO GET HIS WAY --
-- THAT IT NEVER OCCURRED TO HIM.
I COULD HAVE CAUGHT HIM -- SHOULD HAVE. BUT I WAS CARRYING THE OTHERS -- AND THERE WASN'T TIME --
DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP, VANCE. EVERYTHING'S NOT UP TO YOU -- YOU DID YOUR BEST, AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.
SIMON'S GONE AGAIN. BUT THIS TIME -- HE APPEARED WITHOUT MY EVEN CALLING HIM. JUST -- APPEARED.
I'VE GOT TO KNOW THE TRUTH. I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT A PRIORITY TO FIND OUT HOW THIS HAPPENS -- AND WHY --
-- EVEN IF IT MEANS LEAVING THE AVENGERS!
LOOK AT 'EM. THEY'RE YOUNG -- BUT THEY'VE GOT IT MORE TOGETHER THAN I EVER DID. THE TEAM -- AND ITS FUTURE -- ARE IN FINE SHAPE --
-- WHICH'LL MAKE IT EASIER TO DO WHAT I'M GOING TO DO...

THE NEXT DAY, ONCE THE AVENGERS HAVE MADE IT BACK TO NEW YORK...
YOU'VE BEEN SO WONDERFUL TO ME, TIO EDWIN -- ALL OF YOU HAVE!
I'VE GOT TO GO -- GOT TO MOVE INTO MY DORMITORY AT EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY, START ORIENTATION -- BUT I'LL COME BACK AND VISIT!
MAKE SURE YOU DO, LUPE -- I'D FEEL MOST REMISS IN MY DUTIES AS YOUR SPONSOR IF YOU DIDN'T --!
CROSS MY HEART!
TIME FOR ME TO GO, TOO. BUT I GAVE THE VISION MY CONTACT INFORMATION. YOU'RE REAL GOOD PEOPLE, AVENGERS --
-- AND IF YOU NEED ME FOR ANYTHING, I'LL BE HAPPY TO HELP.
WE'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND, TRIATHLON.
AND SO...
MAN, AM I BEAT -- BUT IT'S STILL EARLY.
YOU UP FOR A MOVIE, ANGEL?
SURE -- WE CAN CALL ROBBIE AND DWAYNE --
CAPTAIN AMERICA RADIOED BACK WHAT HAPPENED, WANDA. ARE YOUR INJURIES --?
I'M ALL RIGHT, VISION. I GOT OFF A PARTIAL HEX, LESSENING THE IMPACT --
-- SO ALL I WOUND UP WITH WERE BRUISES, SCRATCHES, AND A NASTY SPRAIN. NOTHING A BOWL OF HAWKEYE'S FIVE-ALARM CHILI WON'T FIX.
SAY -- WHERE IS CLINT, ANYWAY?
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE WE LANDED...
AH, AVENGERS --
-- PERHAPS YOU SHOULD SEE THIS --!
A
Outta here for a while -- maybe a long while. Things to do. So don't wait up -- but leave a light in the window -- Br'er Hawkeye'll be back when you least expect it, like always! -H
NEXT AVENGERS DAY!
(But who invited the Grim Reaper?)

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
the AVENGERS
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
JARVIS' HEAD (and proud of it!)
Let's RAP with CAP
SOCK IT TO SHELL HEAD!
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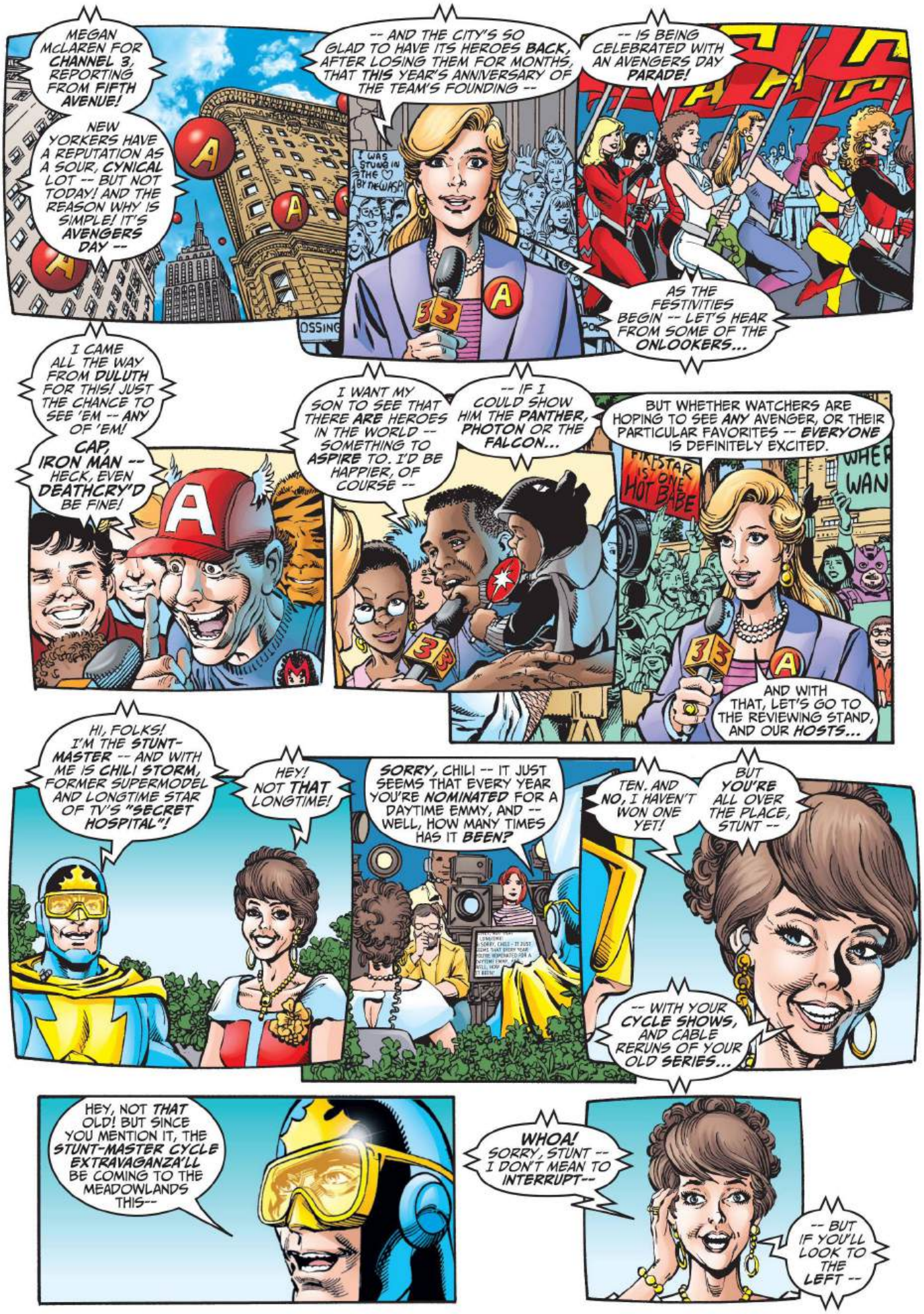

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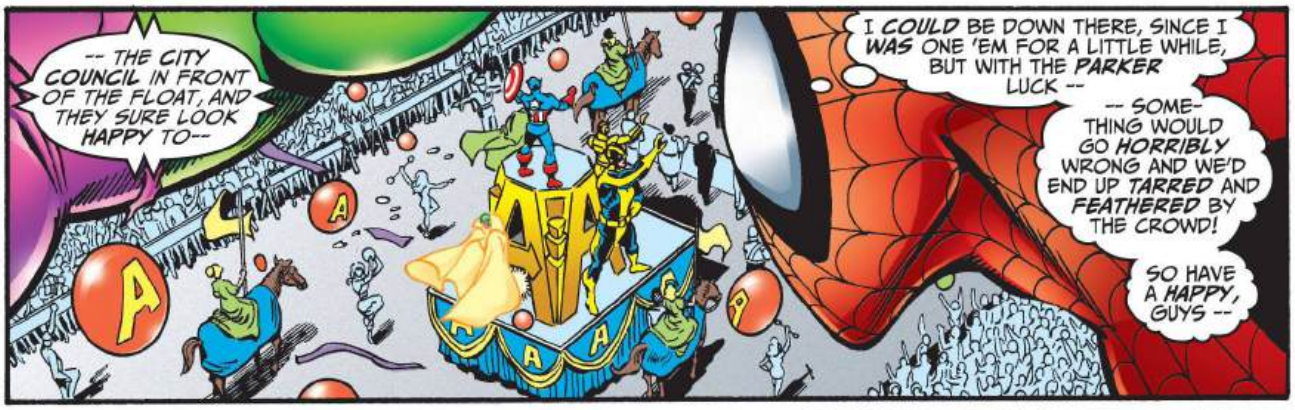
--HERE THEY COME--!
STAN LEE PRESENTATION
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, STAN LEE, JACK KIRBY AND DICK AYERS BROUGHT US THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE MIGHT AVENGERS --
-- AND BEGAN A RICH AND STORIED TRADITION OF HEROIC ADVENTURE!
AL VEY INKS
TOM SMITH COLORS
Rich 'n CC's Dave LETTERS
TOM BREVOORT EDITOR
KURT BUSIEK INVINCIBLE WRITER
BOB HARRAS PRINCE OF POWER
AVENGERS RULE!
CAP ROCKS!
GEORGE PÉREZ LIVING LEGEND
TODAY, THAT TRADITION CONTINUES, AS WE MARK THE OCCASION WITH A LITTLE...
AVENGERS FOREVER!
Pomp & Pageantry


-- THE CITY COUNCIL IN FRONT OF THE FLOAT, AND THEY SURE LOOK HAPPY TO--
I COULD BE DOWN THERE, SINCE I WAS ONE 'EM FOR A LITTLE WHILE, BUT WITH THE PARKER LUCK --
-- SOMETHING WOULD GO HORRIBLY WRONG AND WE'D END UP TARRED AND FEATHERED BY THE CROWD!
SO HAVE A HAPPY, GUYS --

-- YOU'VE EARNED IT!
THIS IS A LITTLE... UNCOMFORTABLE, IRON MAN --
-- AFTER ALL THE "CAPMANIA" I'VE LIVED THROUGH RECENTLY, AND THE TROUBLE IT CAUSED.*
BUT SHOULD YOU EVEN BE HERE, CONSIDERING YOUR INJURIES? **
*In Captain America #5-7.
**Suffered in Iron Man #8-10 -- Tom.

I'LL BE FINE, CAP -- IT'S JUST A PARADE. AND WITH ALL THE WORLD'S BEEN THROUGH RECENTLY, I DON'T KNOW THAT IT ISN'T MORE FOR THEM THAN US...

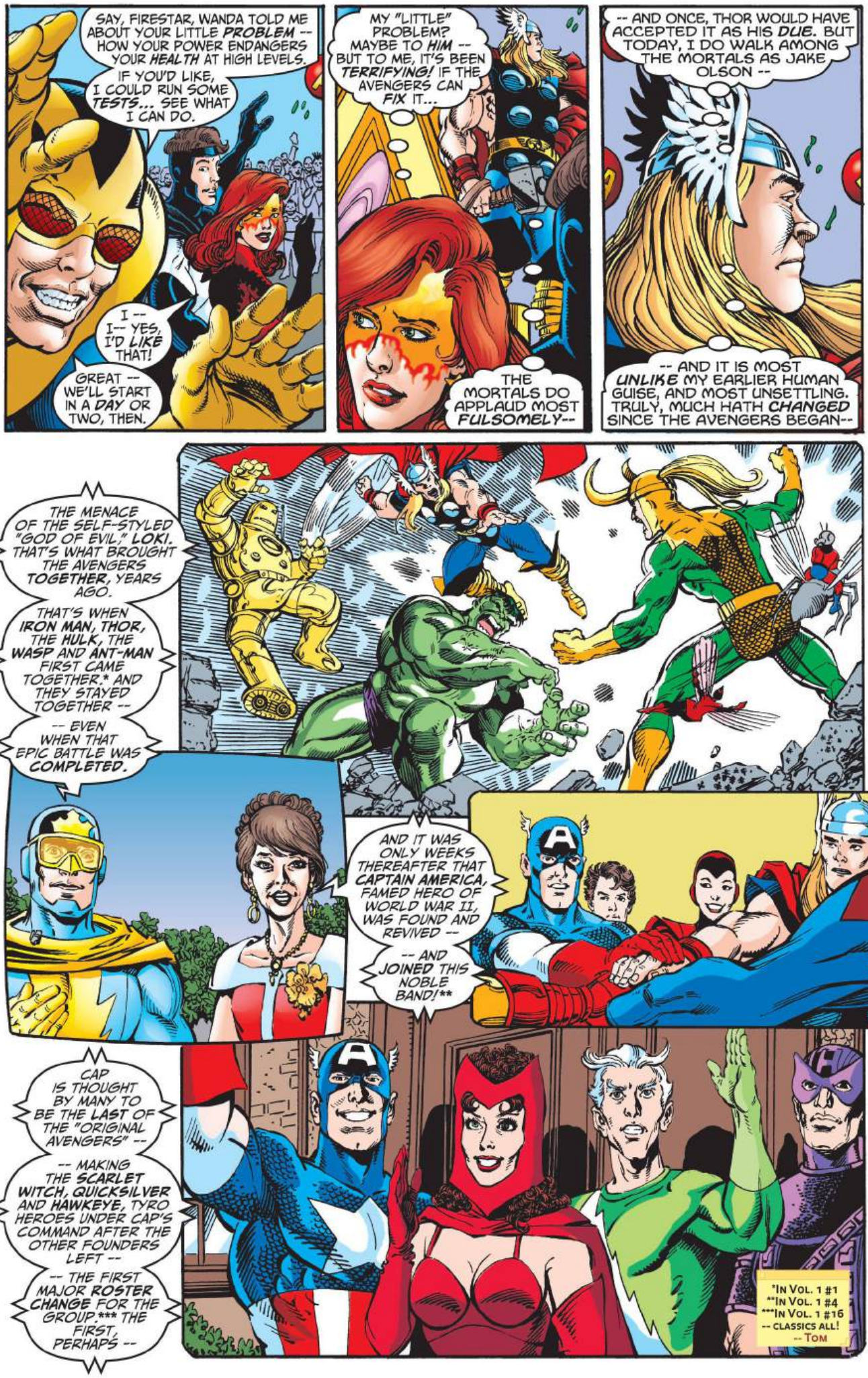
HOW'S THE PROJECTOR WORKING OUT, VISION?
IT FUNCTIONS WELL, GIANT-MAN -- ALLOWING MY HOLOGRAPHIC FORM TO LEAVE THE MANSION, WHILE MY BODY CONTINUES ITS SELF-REPAIR.
I NOTE YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR COSTUME -- TO A VARIANT OF YOUR GOLIATH DESIGN, JUST AS THE PREVIOUS ONE ECHOED YOUR ANT-MAN GARB.
BUT YOU NEVER USE ELEMENTS FROM YOUR YELLOWJACKET DESIGN...

THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT, VISION.
I WAS MENTALLY ILL WHEN I "CREATED" YELLOWJACKET -- AND IT WAS IN THAT SUIT THAT I HIT JAN... STRUCK MY WIFE. SHE MAY'VE FORGIVEN THAT...
...BUT I HAVEN'T. YELLOWJACKET'S DEAD -- AND I WANT HIM TO STAY BURIED.

JUSTICE, FIRESTAR! YOU'RE FULL AVENGERS NOW -- SO HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
IT'S AMAZING, WASP... I MEAN, JAN!

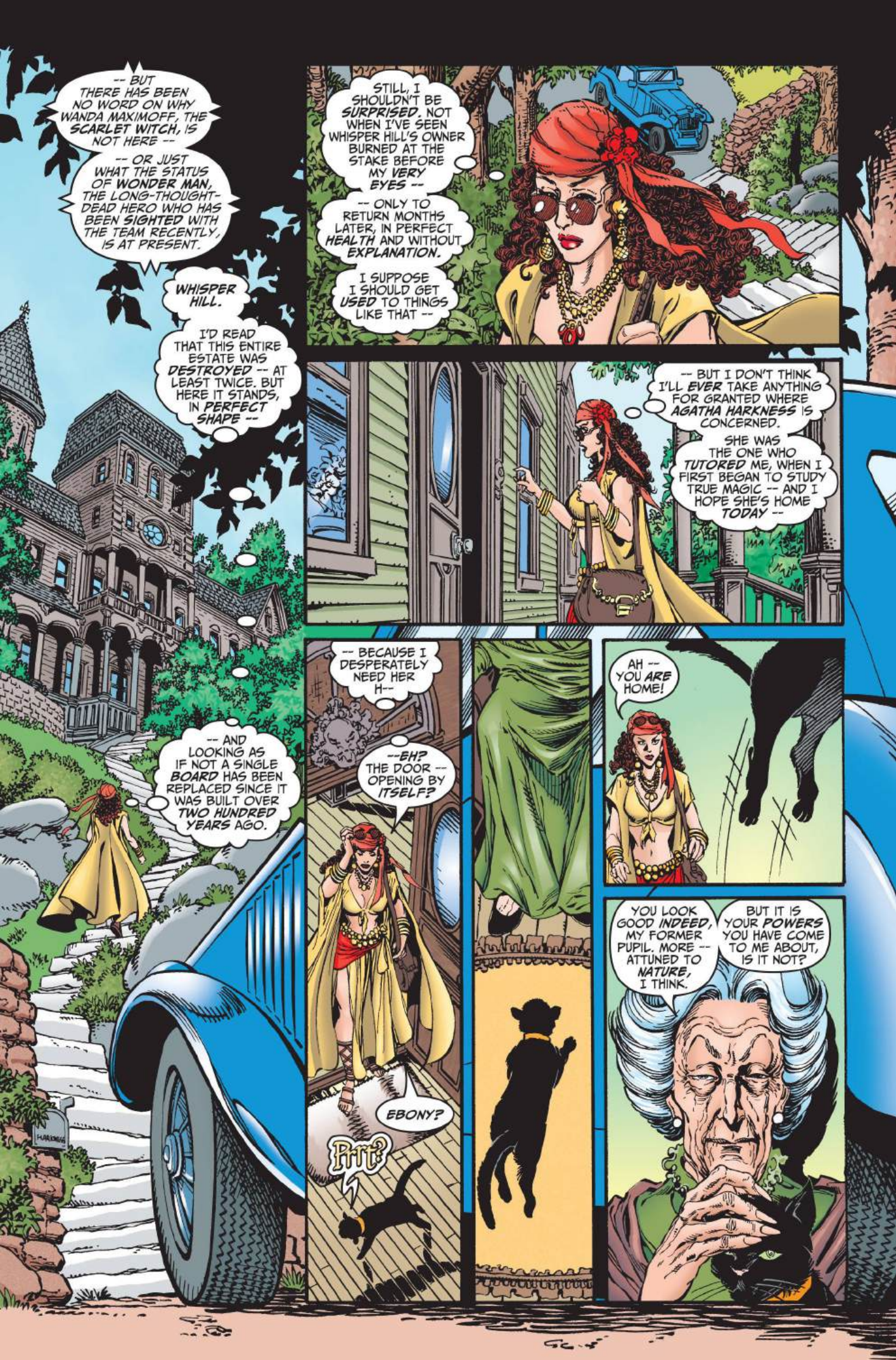
I MEAN, I'M PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE NEW WARRIORS, AND I THINK WE ACCOMPLISHED A LOT OF GOOD, BUT THIS IS SO -- SO --

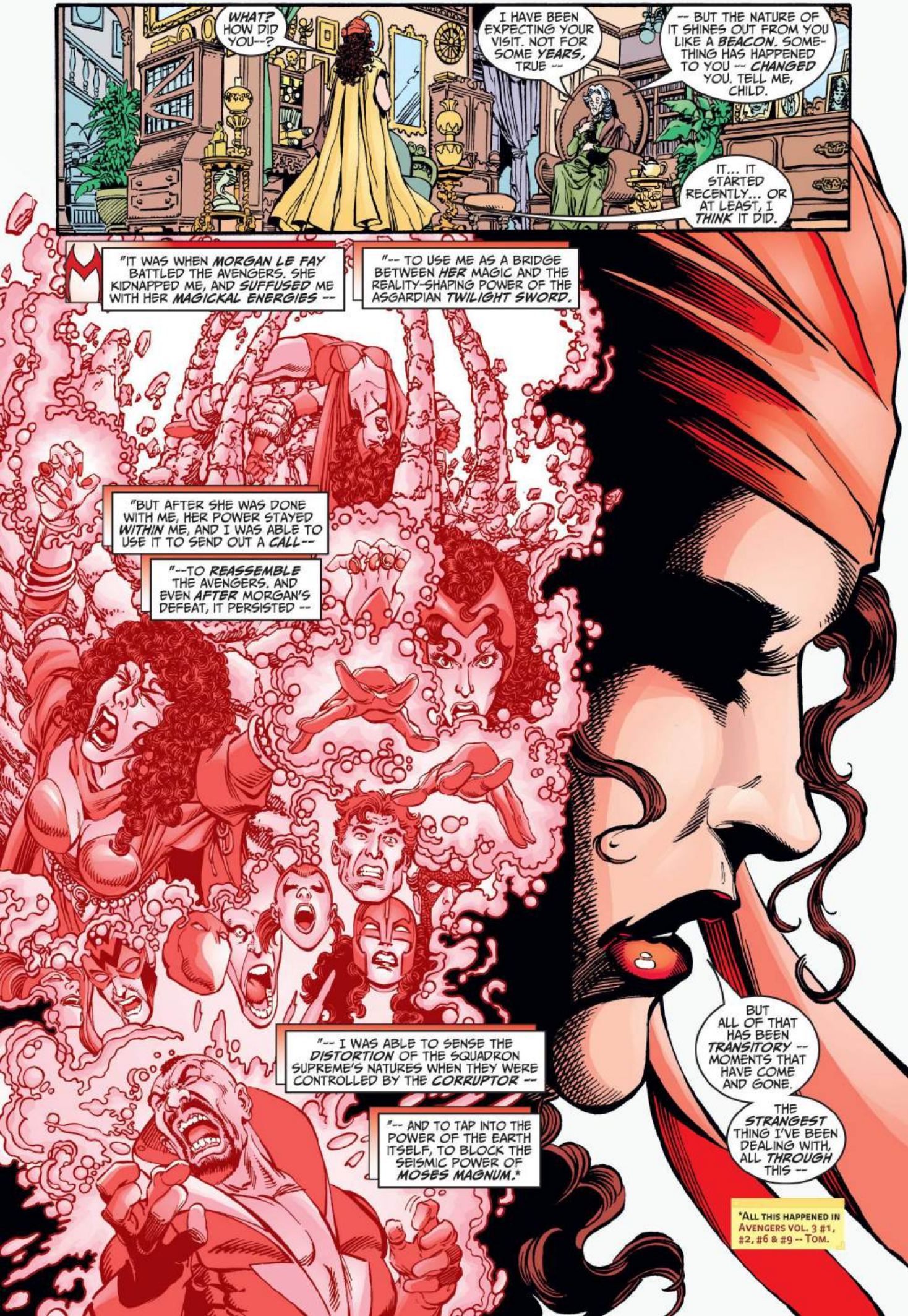
OVERSTATED, MAYBE? AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, FIRESTAR?
IT'S... OKAY, I GUESS. IT'S FINE.

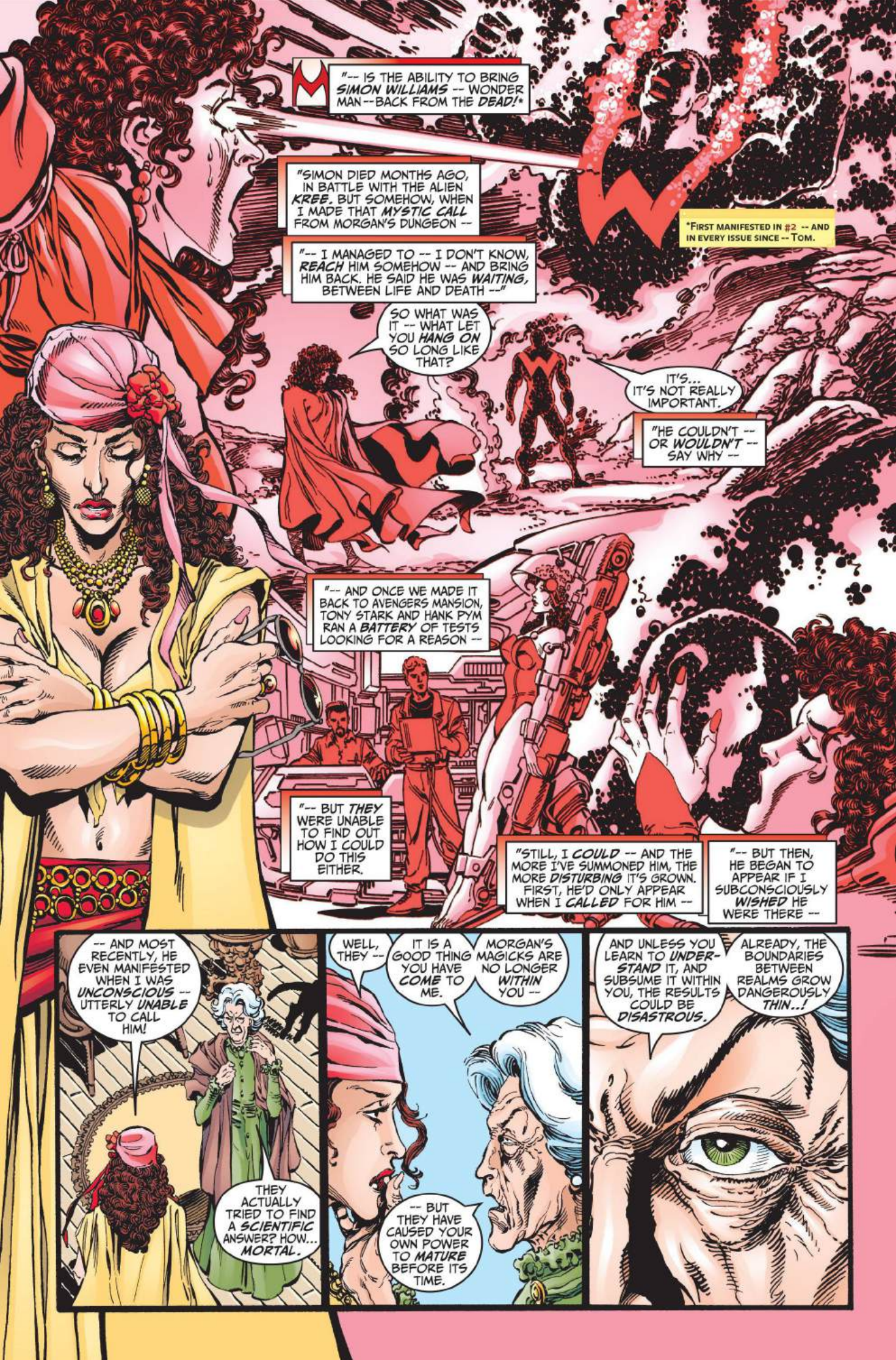

SAY, FIRESTAR, WANDA TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR LITTLE PROBLEM -- HOW YOUR POWER ENDANGERS YOUR HEALTH AT HIGH LEVELS.
IF YOU'D LIKE, I COULD RUN SOME TESTS... SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
I -- I-- YES, I'D LIKE THAT!
GREAT -- WE'LL START IN A DAY OR TWO, THEN.
MY "LITTLE" PROBLEM? MAYBE TO HIM -- BUT TO ME, IT'S BEEN TERRIFYING! IF THE AVENGERS CAN FIX IT...
THE MORTALS DO APPLAUD MOST FULSOMELY--
-- AND ONCE, THOR WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED IT AS HIS DUE. BUT TODAY, I DO WALK AMONG THE MORTALS AS JAKE OLSON --
-- AND IT IS MOST UNLIKE MY EARLIER HUMAN GUISE, AND MOST UNSETTLING. TRULY, MUCH HATH CHANGED SINCE THE AVENGERS BEGAN--
THE MENACE OF THE SELF-STYLED "GOD OF EVIL," LOKI. THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT THE AVENGERS TOGETHER, YEARS AGO.
THAT'S WHEN IRON MAN, THOR, THE HULK, THE WASP AND ANT-MAN FIRST CAME TOGETHER.* AND THEY STAYED TOGETHER --
-- EVEN WHEN THAT EPIC BATTLE WAS COMPLETED.
AND IT WAS ONLY WEEKS THEREAFTER THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA, FAMED HERO OF WORLD WAR II, WAS FOUND AND REVIVED --
-- AND JOINED THIS NOBLE BAND!**
CAP IS THOUGHT BY MANY TO BE THE LAST OF THE "ORIGINAL AVENGERS" --
-- MAKING THE SCARLET WITCH, QUICKSILVER AND HAWKEYE, TYRO HEROES UNDER CAP'S COMMAND AFTER THE OTHER FOUNDERS LEFT --
-- THE FIRST MAJOR ROSTER CHANGE FOR THE GROUP.*** THE FIRST, PERHAPS --
*IN VOL. 1 #1
**IN VOL. 1 #4
***IN VOL. 1 #16
-- CLASSICS ALL!
-- TOM

-- BUT BY NO MEANS THE LAST!
OVER THE YEARS, THE AVENGERS HAVE COUNTED AMONG THEIR NUMBER HEROES FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE --
-- FROM "THE GIRL NEXT DOOR" TO MONARCHS OF OTHER LANDS -- AND EVEN STALWARTS FROM THE FUTURE, OR FROM OUTER SPACE.
AND THROUGH IT ALL, THE TEAM HAS TRULY EARNED THE SOBRIQUET OF "EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES"!

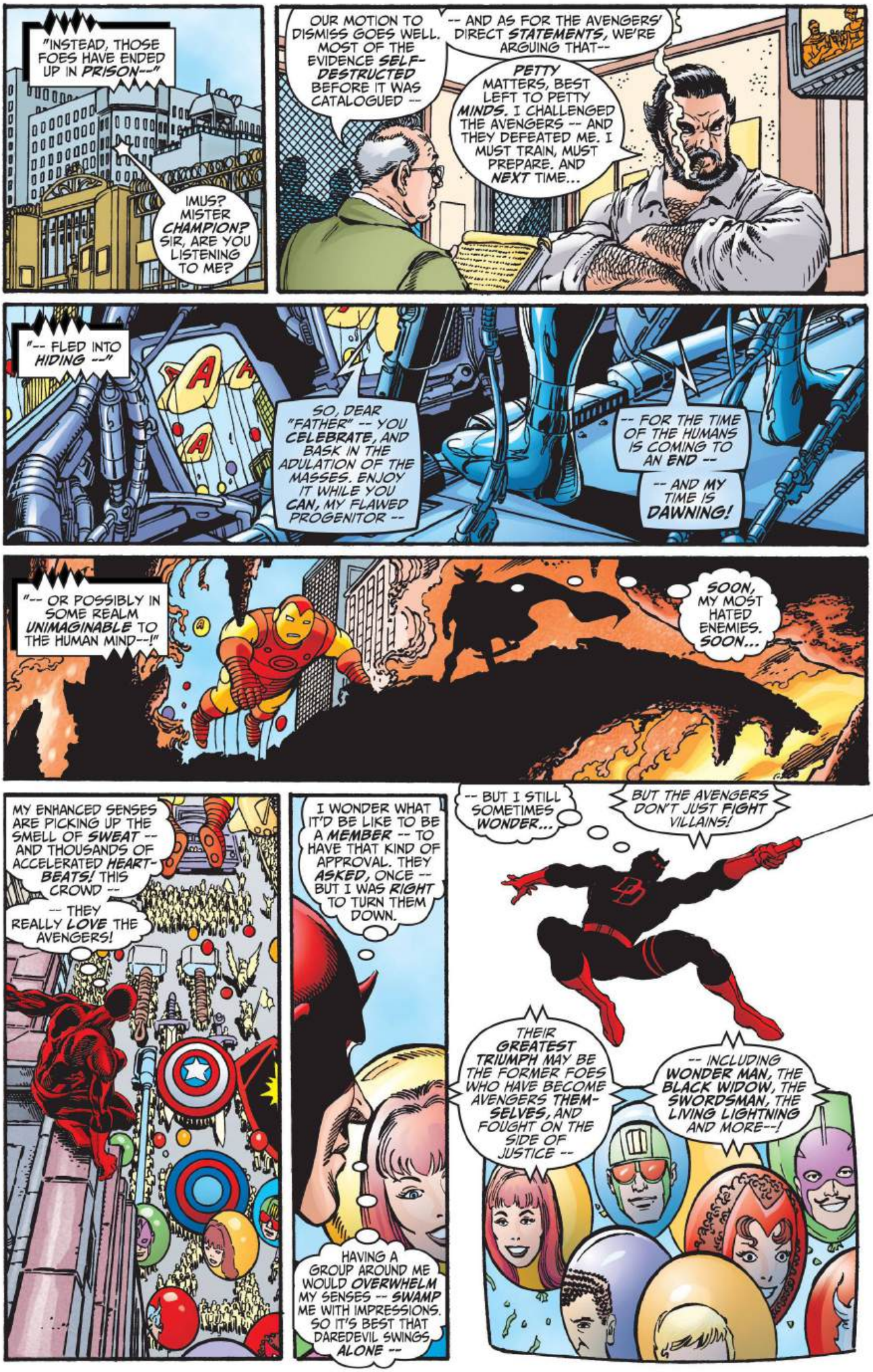
ALMOST ALL OF THE TEAM'S FOUNDING MEMBERS ARE HERE TODAY, INCLUDING GIANT-MAN AND THE WASP --
-- WHO HAVE JUST BECOME THE TEAM'S LATEST RESERVE MEMBERS --
GIVE ME A BREAK! THE X-MEN DEBUTED AROUND THE SAME TIME AS THE AVENGERS -- BUT DO WE GET A FUSS OVER OUR ANNIVERSARY?
IT IS WHAT WE DO THAT MATTERS, KATYA, NOT HOW THE PRESS TREATS US.
AND THE AVENGERS AND X-MEN BOTH HAVE MUCH TO BE PROUD OF.
BESIDES, WHO CARES? WE'RE NOT IN COMPETITION WITH 'EM, ARE WE?
OH?
BEAST'S BOY
BORN TO BE AN AVENGER!
WHAT? THE BEAST--?
FORGET IT, BUB. HE'S OURS.
"BUT NOT ALL OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SO LUCKY. THE INCREDIBLE HULK, RECENTLY PARDONED FOR HIS DESTRUCTIVE ACTS BY THE GOVERNMENT, IS ONCE AGAIN HUNTED AND HOUNDED--"
THE AVENGERS. IF THE HULK DID ONE GOOD THING IN HIS MISBEGOTTEN EXISTENCE, THAT'S GOT TO BE IT.
BUT I CAN'T LINGER. I'VE GOT A CHANCE TO FIND OUT WHO KILLED MY WIFE -- AND I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW UP ON IT!*
*SEE CURRENT ISSUES OF INCREDIBLE HULK FOR DETAILS! -- TOM
"AND EVEN CURRENT MEMBERS ARE ABSENT TODAY. REPORTS HAVE REACHED US THAT HAWKEYE, LONG ONE OF THE TEAM'S MAINSTAYS, HAS LEFT THE ROSTER ON A SPECIAL MISSION --"
HUH? SOMEONE MENTION MY NAME--?
EXCUSE ME, EH, SIR -- BUT THE COMMISSION WILL SEE YOU NOW.
WELL, ALL RIGHT. TOOK LONG ENOUGH!*
*WHY'S HAWKEYE MEETING WITH THE COMMISSION? SEE THUNDERBOLTS #20-21 TO FIND OUT! -- TOM

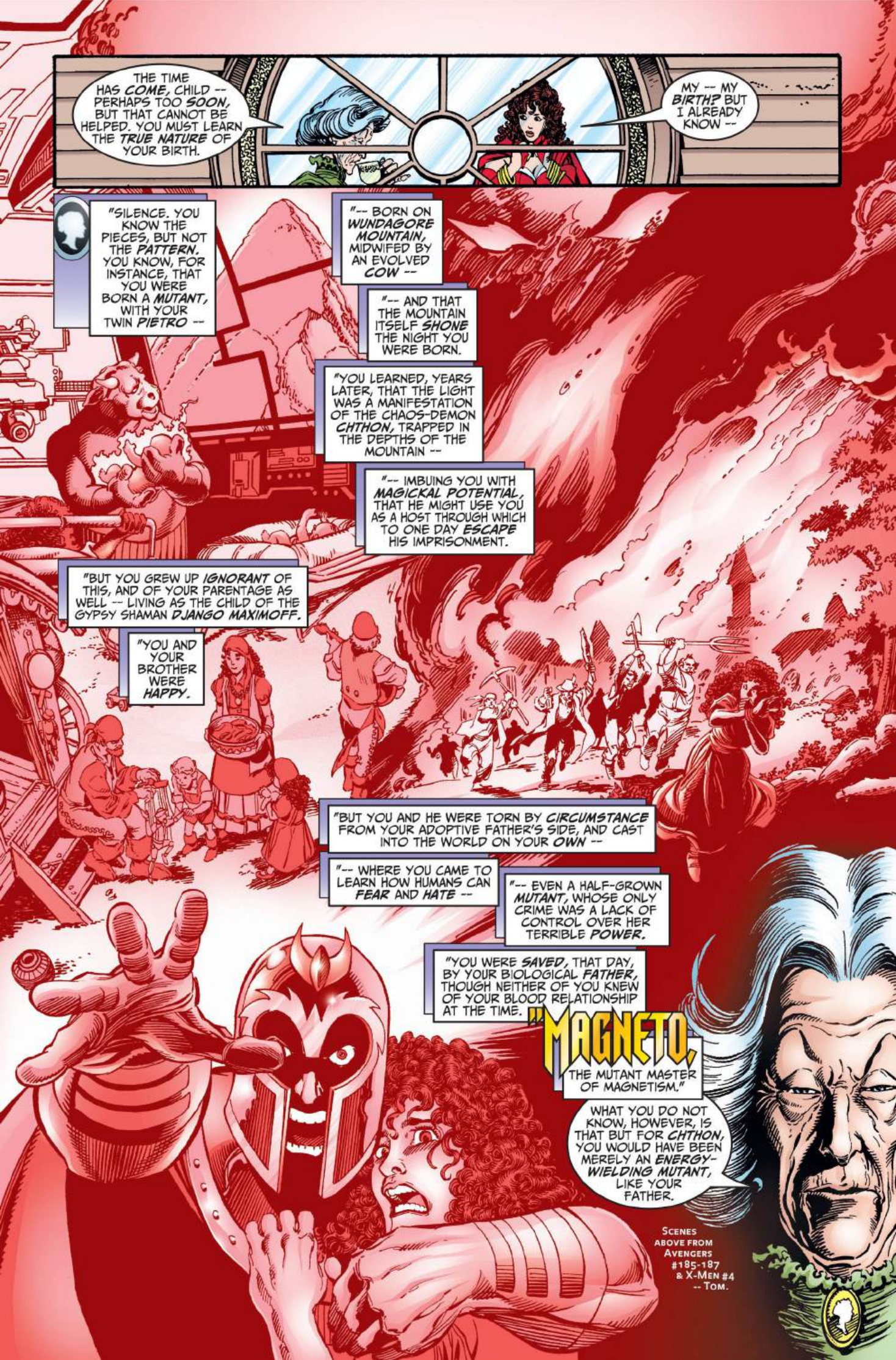

-- BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO WORD ON WHY WANDA MAXIMOFF, THE SCARLET WITCH, IS NOT HERE --
-- OR JUST WHAT THE STATUS OF WONDER MAN, THE LONG-THOUGHT-DEAD HERO WHO HAS BEEN SIGHTED WITH THE TEAM RECENTLY, IS AT PRESENT.
WHISPER HILL.
I'D READ THAT THIS ENTIRE ESTATE WAS DESTROYED -- AT LEAST TWICE. BUT HERE IT STANDS, IN PERFECT SHAPE --
-- AND LOOKING AS IF NOT A SINGLE BOARD HAS BEEN REPLACED SINCE IT WAS BUILT OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
STILL, I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED. NOT WHEN I'VE SEEN WHISPER HILL'S OWNER BURNED AT THE STAKE BEFORE MY VERY EYES --
-- ONLY TO RETURN MONTHS LATER, IN PERFECT HEALTH AND WITHOUT EXPLANATION.
I SUPPOSE I SHOULD GET USED TO THINGS LIKE THAT --
-- BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANTED WHERE AGATHA HARKNESS IS CONCERNED.
SHE WAS THE ONE WHO TUTORED ME, WHEN I FIRST BEGAN TO STUDY TRUE MAGIC -- AND I HOPE SHE'S HOME TODAY --
-- BECAUSE I DESPERATELY NEED HER H--
--EH? THE DOOR -- OPENING BY ITSELF?
EBONY?
Prrt?
AH -- YOU ARE HOME!
YOU LOOK GOOD INDEED, MY FORMER PUPIL. MORE -- ATTUNED TO NATURE, I THINK.
BUT IT IS YOUR POWERS YOU HAVE COME TO ME ABOUT, IS IT NOT?


WHAT? HOW DID YOU--?
I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOUR VISIT. NOT FOR SOME YEARS, TRUE --
-- BUT THE NATURE OF IT SHINES OUT FROM YOU LIKE A BEACON. SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO YOU -- CHANGED YOU. TELL ME, CHILD.
IT... IT STARTED RECENTLY... OR AT LEAST, I THINK IT DID.
"IT WAS WHEN MORGAN LE FAY BATTLED THE AVENGERS. SHE KIDNAPPED ME, AND SUFFUSED ME WITH HER MAGICKAL ENERGIES --
"-- TO USE ME AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN HER MAGIC AND THE REALITY-SHAPING POWER OF THE ASGARDIAN TWILIGHT SWORD.
"BUT AFTER SHE WAS DONE WITH ME, HER POWER STAYED WITHIN ME, AND I WAS ABLE TO USE IT TO SEND OUT A CALL--
"--TO REASSEMBLE THE AVENGERS. AND EVEN AFTER MORGAN'S DEFEAT, IT PERSISTED --
"-- I WAS ABLE TO SENSE THE DISTORTION OF THE SQUADRON SUPREME'S NATURES WHEN THEY WERE CONTROLLED BY THE CORRUPTOR --
"-- AND TO TAP INTO THE POWER OF THE EARTH ITSELF, TO BLOCK THE SEISMIC POWER OF MOSES MAGNUM.*
BUT ALL OF THAT HAS BEEN TRANSITORY -- MOMENTS THAT HAVE COME AND GONE.
THE STRANGEST THING I'VE BEEN DEALING WITH, ALL THROUGH THIS --
*ALL THIS HAPPENED IN AVENGERS VOL. 3 #1, #2, #6 & #9 -- TOM.


"-- IS THE ABILITY TO BRING SIMON WILLIAMS -- WONDER MAN -- BACK FROM THE DEAD!*
*FIRST MANIFESTED IN #2 -- AND IN EVERY ISSUE SINCE -- TOM.
"SIMON DIED MONTHS AGO, IN BATTLE WITH THE ALIEN KREE. BUT SOMEHOW, WHEN I MADE THAT MYSTIC CALL FROM MORGAN'S DUNGEON --
"-- I MANAGED TO -- I DON'T KNOW, REACH HIM SOMEHOW -- AND BRING HIM BACK. HE SAID HE WAS WAITING, BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH --"
SO WHAT WAS IT -- WHAT LET YOU HANG ON SO LONG LIKE THAT?
IT'S... IT'S NOT REALLY IMPORTANT.
"HE COULDN'T -- OR WOULDN'T -- SAY WHY --
"-- AND ONCE WE MADE IT BACK TO AVENGERS MANSION, TONY STARK AND HANK PYM RAN A BATTERY OF TESTS LOOKING FOR A REASON --
"-- BUT THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND OUT HOW I COULD DO THIS EITHER.
"STILL, I COULD -- AND THE MORE I'VE SUMMONED HIM, THE MORE DISTURBING IT'S GROWN. FIRST, HE'D ONLY APPEAR WHEN I CALLED FOR HIM --
"-- BUT THEN, HE BEGAN TO APPEAR IF I SUBCONSCIOUSLY WISHED HE WERE THERE --
-- AND MOST RECENTLY, HE EVEN MANIFESTED WHEN I WAS UNCONSCIOUS -- UTTERLY UNABLE TO CALL HIM!
THEY ACTUALLY TRIED TO FIND A SCIENTIFIC ANSWER? HOW... MORTAL.
WELL, THEY --
IT IS A GOOD THING YOU HAVE COME TO ME.
MORGAN'S MAGICKS ARE NO LONGER WITHIN YOU --
-- BUT THEY HAVE CAUSED YOUR OWN POWER TO MATURE BEFORE ITS TIME.
AND UNLESS YOU LEARN TO UNDERSTAND IT, AND SUBSUME IT WITHIN YOU, THE RESULTS COULD BE DISASTROUS.
ALREADY, THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN REALMS GROW DANGEROUSLY THIN..!

AND THEN, THERE ARE THE VILLAINS...
THE AVENGERS HAVE GONE UP AGAINST A VIRTUAL WHO'S WHO OF THE MOST POWERFUL AND DANGEROUS BEINGS THE UNIVERSE HAS TO OFFER --
-- BUT NONE OF THEM HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PUT THE AVENGERS DOWN FOR THE COUNT!

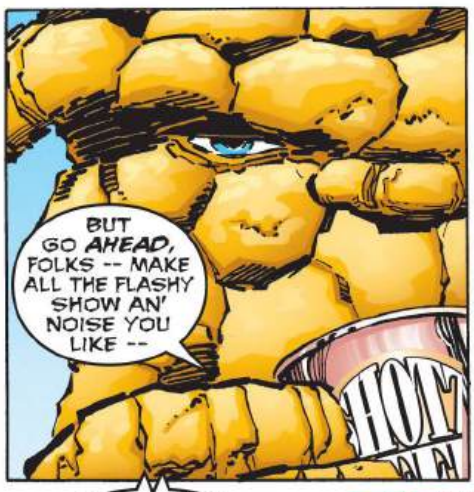

"INSTEAD, THOSE FOES HAVE ENDED UP IN PRISON--"
IMUS? MISTER CHAMPION? SIR, ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
OUR MOTION TO DISMISS GOES WELL. MOST OF THE EVIDENCE SELF-DESTRUCTED BEFORE IT WAS CATALOGUED --
-- AND AS FOR THE AVENGERS' DIRECT STATEMENTS, WE'RE ARGUING THAT--
PETTY MATTERS, BEST LEFT TO PETTY MINDS. I CHALLENGED THE AVENGERS -- AND THEY DEFEATED ME. I MUST TRAIN, MUST PREPARE. AND NEXT TIME...
"-- FLED INTO HIDING --"
SO, DEAR "FATHER" -- YOU CELEBRATE, AND BASK IN THE ADULATION OF THE MASSES. ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN, MY FLAWED PROGENITOR --
-- FOR THE TIME OF THE HUMANS IS COMING TO AN END --
-- AND MY TIME IS DAWNING!
"-- OR POSSIBLY IN SOME REALM UNIMAGINABLE TO THE HUMAN MIND--!"
SOON, MY MOST HATED ENEMIES. SOON...
MY ENHANCED SENSES ARE PICKING UP THE SMELL OF SWEAT -- AND THOUSANDS OF ACCELERATED HEART-BEATS! THIS CROWD --
-- THEY REALLY LOVE THE AVENGERS!
I WONDER WHAT IT'D BE LIKE TO BE A MEMBER -- TO HAVE THAT KIND OF APPROVAL. THEY ASKED, ONCE -- BUT I WAS RIGHT TO TURN THEM DOWN.
HAVING A GROUP AROUND ME WOULD OVERWHELM MY SENSES -- SWAMP ME WITH IMPRESSIONS. SO IT'S BEST THAT DAREDEVIL SWINGS ALONE --
-- BUT I STILL SOMETIMES WONDER...
BUT THE AVENGERS DON'T JUST FIGHT VILLAINS!
THEIR GREATEST TRIUMPH MAY BE THE FORMER FOES WHO HAVE BECOME AVENGERS THEM-SELVES, AND FOUGHT ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE --
-- INCLUDING WONDER MAN, THE BLACK WIDOW, THE SWORDSMAN, THE LIVING LIGHTNING AND MORE--!



Scenes above from Avengers #185-187 & X-Men #4 -- Tom.

*And these scenes are from Avengers #47 & #133 -- Tom.

YAK YAK YAK YAK YAK YAK YAK YAK!
WHO'D'A THOUGHT THERE WAS THIS MUCH HOT AIR IN ALL A' MANHATTAN!


BUT GO AHEAD, FOLKS -- MAKE ALL THE FLASHY SHOW AN' NOISE YOU LIKE --

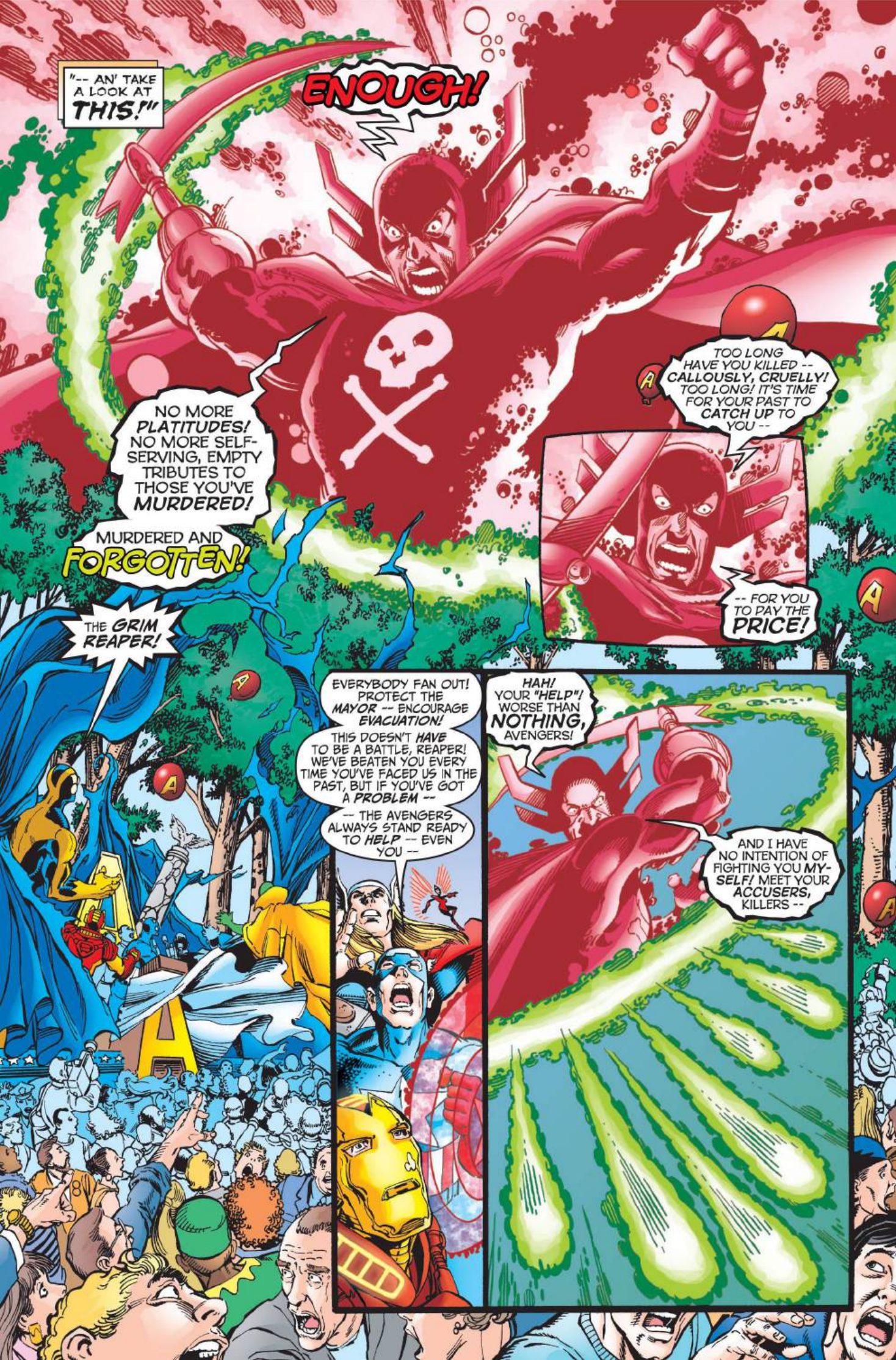
-- JUST SO'S YOU DON'T FORGET WHO WAS HERE FIRST -- NAMELY THE EVER-LOVIN' BLUE-EYED THING AN' HIS BUDDIES IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR --!
SIZE DOES MATTER! GIANT-MAN ROCKS!
AVENGERS
THE SO-BE-IT UNION
AND NOW, VIEWERS, WE COME TO A VERY SOLEMN PART OF TODAY'S FESTIVITIES --

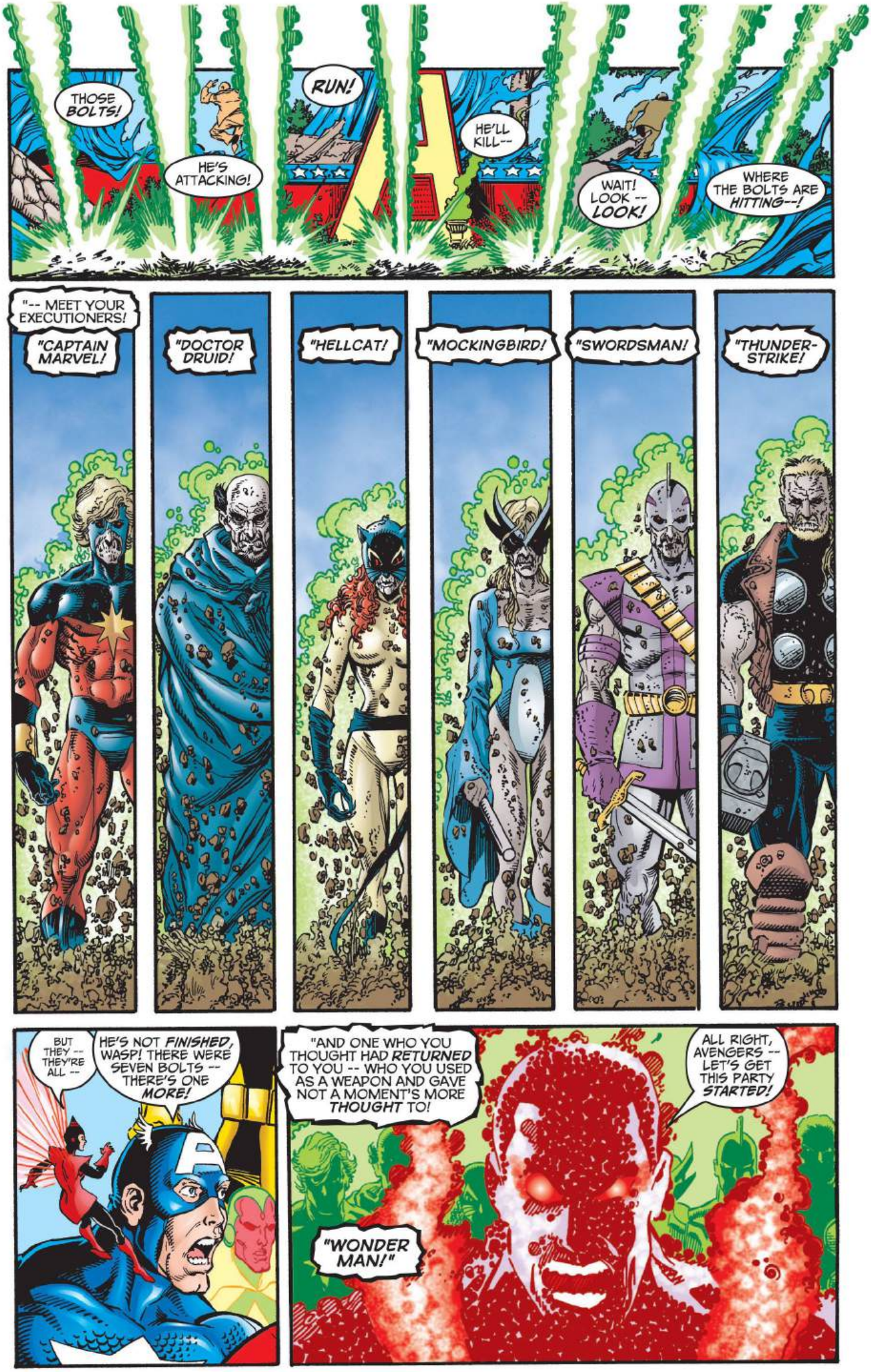
-- AS THE AVENGERS PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE OF THEIR NUMBER WHO'VE FALLEN. HEROES WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE --
-- SUCH AS THE SWORDSMAN, MOCKINGBIRD, GILGAMESH AND MORE.
LET'S GO TO MEGAN McLAREN, IN CENTRAL PARK, FOR DIRECT COVERAGE OF THE CEREMONY...
THANKS, STUNT-MASTER. THE PARADE HAS COME TO A HALT, HERE IN CENTRAL PARK, WHERE THE MAYOR IS GREETING THE AVENGERS --
-- PREPARATORY TO DEDICATING A PLAQUE IN THE NAMES OF ALL THE DECEASED AVENGERS --
-- REPLACING THE STATUE THAT ONCE HONORED THOSE HEROES THOUGHT LOST IN THE ONSLAUGHT DISASTER, BUT NOW RETURNED TO US.

THANK YOU, MR. MAYOR, COUNCILMEN, PEOPLE OF NEW YORK. YOU DO US GREAT HONOR.
BUT IT'S NOT THE LIVING WE COME TO HONOR TODAY. INSTEAD, IT'S --
HEROES

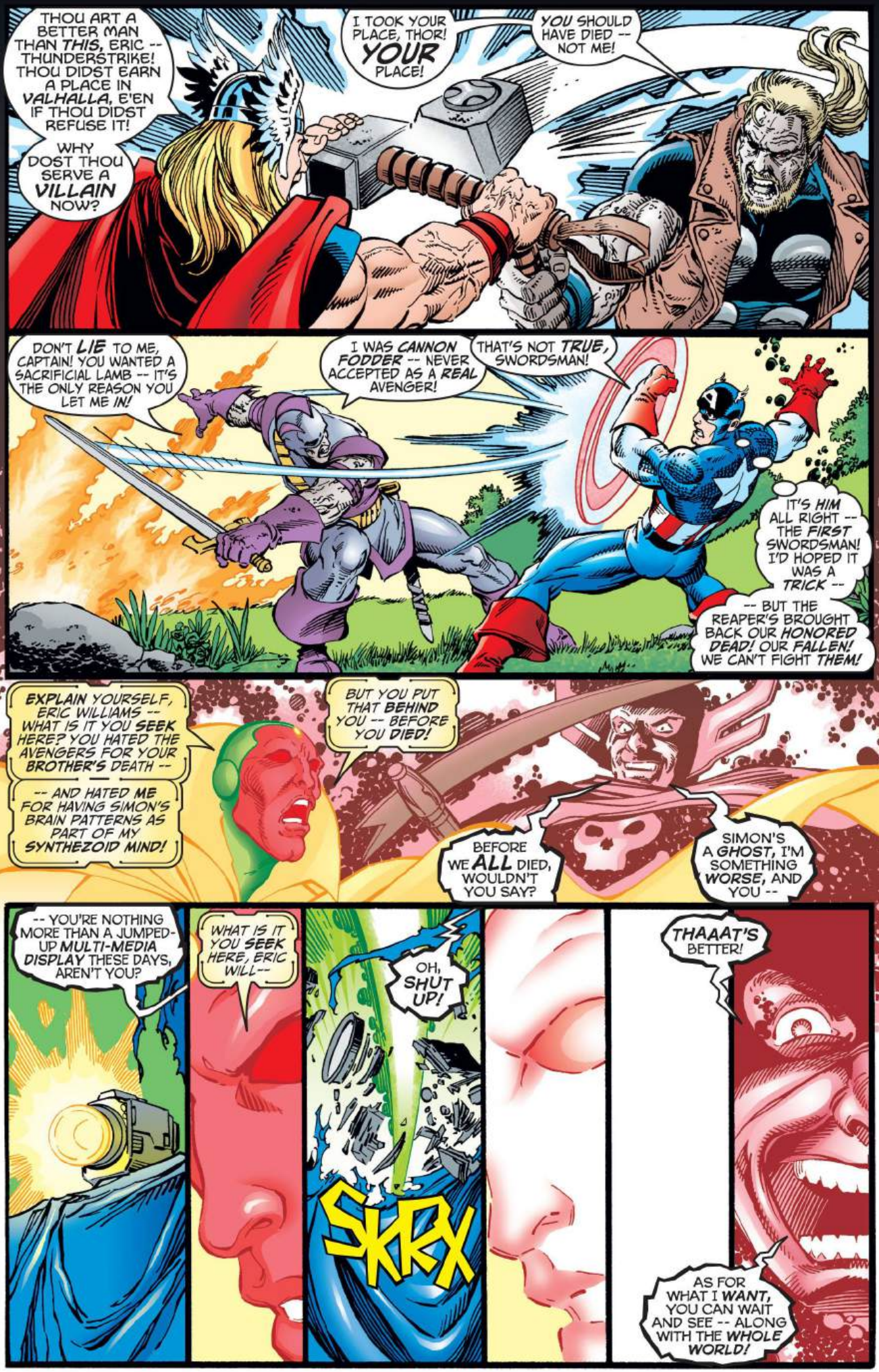
HUH?! THAT -- THAT LIGHT --?

PTHBLTH
HEY, REED! JOHNNY, SUZIE, COME QUICK --

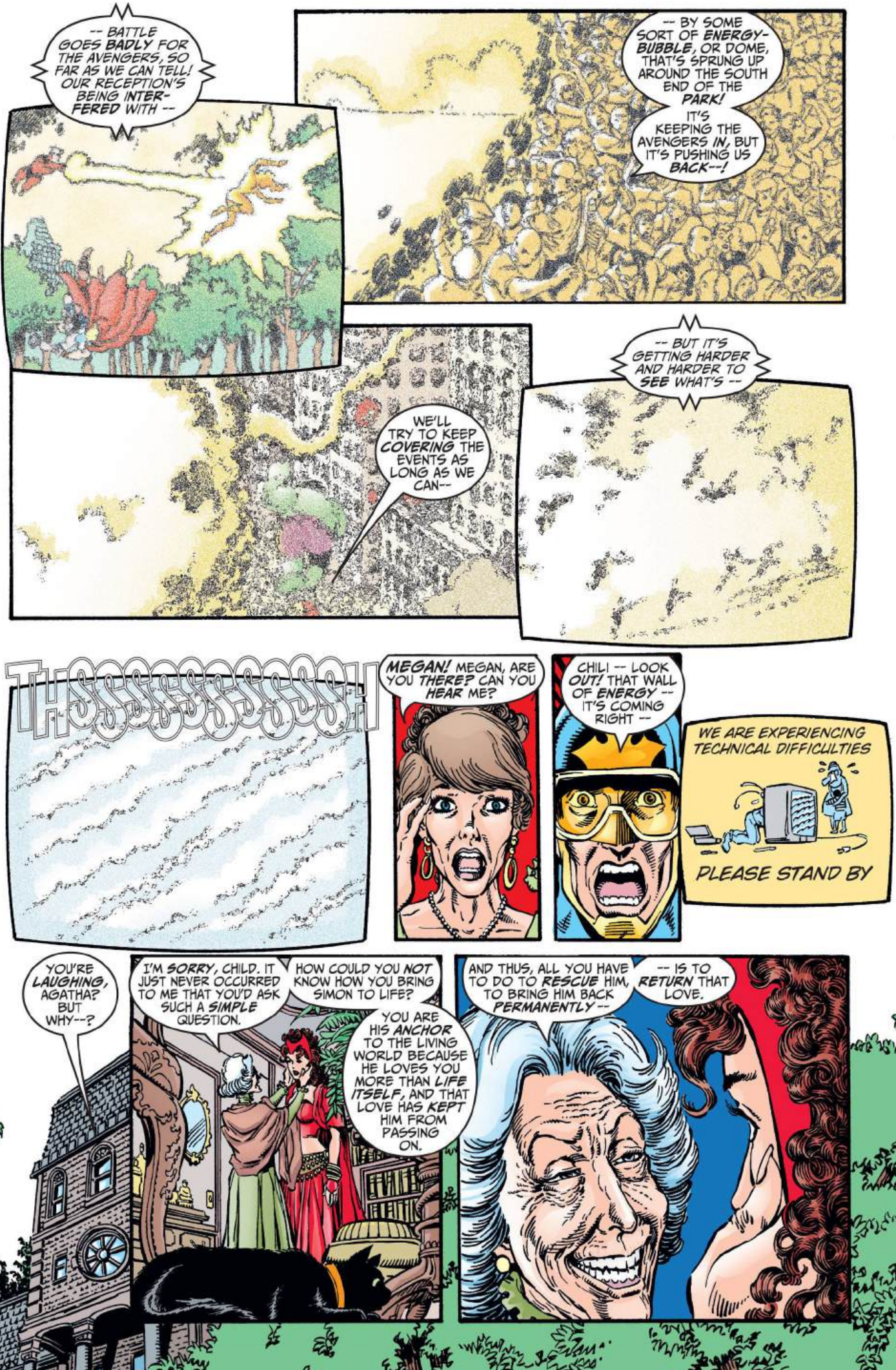

"-- AN' TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!"
ENOUGH!
NO MORE PLATITUDES! NO MORE SELF-SERVING, EMPTY TRIBUTES TO THOSE YOU'VE MURDERED!
MURDERED AND FORGOTTEN!
TOO LONG HAVE YOU KILLED -- CALLOUSLY, CRUELLY! TOO LONG! IT'S TIME FOR YOUR PAST TO CATCH UP TO YOU --
-- FOR YOU TO PAY THE PRICE!
THE GRIM REAPER!
EVERYBODY FAN OUT! PROTECT THE MAYOR -- ENCOURAGE EVACUATION!
THIS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A BATTLE, REAPER! WE'VE BEATEN YOU EVERY TIME YOU'VE FACED US IN THE PAST, BUT IF YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM --
-- THE AVENGERS ALWAYS STAND READY TO HELP -- EVEN YOU --
HAH! YOUR "HELP"! WORSE THAN NOTHING, AVENGERS!
AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF FIGHTING YOU MYSELF! MEET YOUR ACCUSERS, KILLERS --


THOSE BOLTS!
HE'S ATTACKING!
RUN!
HE'LL KILL--
WAIT! LOOK -- LOOK!
WHERE THE BOLTS ARE HITTING--!
"-- MEET YOUR EXECUTIONERS!
"CAPTAIN MARVEL!
"DOCTOR DRUID!
"HELLCAT!
"MOCKINGBIRD!
"SWORDSMAN!
"THUNDER-STRIKE!
BUT THEY -- THEY'RE ALL --
HE'S NOT FINISHED, WASP! THERE WERE SEVEN BOLTS -- THERE'S ONE MORE!
"AND ONE WHO YOU THOUGHT HAD RETURNED TO YOU -- WHO YOU USED AS A WEAPON AND GAVE NOT A MOMENT'S MORE THOUGHT TO!
ALL RIGHT, AVENGERS -- LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED!
"WONDER MAN!"

YOU'VE TOLD ME A LOT, AGATHA -- SHOWN ME SOMETHING I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED. BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY WHY I CAME.
I WAS HOPING YOU COULD HELP ME UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON WITH SIMON -- WHY I CAN BRING HIM BACK --
-- AND HOW TO DO IT PERMANENTLY.
REALLY?
HAHAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHAH
YOU FAILED US, IRON MAN! YOU FAILED US ALL!
MAR-VELL -- STOP! WE WERE FRIENDS!
THIS MAKES NO SENSE! THE REAPER WAS WONDER MAN'S BROTHER -- HE WAS ALWAYS OBSESSED WITH SIMON, OR HIMSELF!
WE CARE ABOUT THESE FOLKS, BUT WHY WOULD HE -- AND WHY ISN'T HE DEAD HIMSELF? LORD, I HATE MAGIC --!
SO, YOU MUST BE THE LATEST LITTLE INGENUE -- EH, RED? WELL LET ME WARN YOU --
-- THE AVENGERS DON'T TAKE VERY GOOD CARE OF THEIR INGENUES!
AAHHH!
SIMON, WAIT! WE CAN TALK THIS -- UHH!
THE TIME FOR TALK IS PAST! THE TIME FOR TALK WAS WHEN WE WERE ALIVE!
TOK
YOU'RE HESITATING, KID! WHAT'S THE MATTER -- CAN'T FIGHT A FELLOW AVENGER?
THAT'LL COST YOU!
DEPOSIT LITTER HERE
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN LEADER, WASP!
I'D NEVER HAVE LET YOU DIE -- UNAVENGED!
STAY BACK, ANTHONY! I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO HURT YOU!


THOU ART A BETTER MAN THAN THIS, ERIC -- THUNDERSTRIKE! THOU DIDST EARN A PLACE IN VALHALLA, E'EN IF THOU DIDST REFUSE IT!
WHY DOST THOU SERVE A VILLAIN NOW?
I TOOK YOUR PLACE, THOR! YOUR PLACE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED -- NOT ME!
DON'T LIE TO ME, CAPTAIN! YOU WANTED A SACRIFICIAL LAMB -- IT'S THE ONLY REASON YOU LET ME IN!
I WAS CANNON FODDER -- NEVER ACCEPTED AS A REAL AVENGER!
THAT'S NOT TRUE, SWORDSMAN!
IT'S HIM ALL RIGHT -- THE FIRST SWORDSMAN! I'D HOPED IT WAS A TRICK --
-- BUT THE REAPER'S BROUGHT BACK OUR HONORED DEAD! OUR FALLEN! WE CAN'T FIGHT THEM!
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, ERIC WILLIAMS -- WHAT IS IT YOU SEEK HERE? YOU HATED THE AVENGERS FOR YOUR BROTHER'S DEATH --
-- AND HATED ME FOR HAVING SIMON'S BRAIN PATTERNS AS PART OF MY SYNTHEZOID MIND!
BUT YOU PUT THAT BEHIND YOU -- BEFORE YOU DIED!
BEFORE WE ALL DIED, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
SIMON'S A GHOST, I'M SOMETHING WORSE, AND YOU --
-- YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A JUMPED-UP MULTI-MEDIA DISPLAY THESE DAYS, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT IS IT YOU SEEK HERE, ERIC WILL--
OH, SHUT UP!
SKRX
THAAAT'S BETTER!
AS FOR WHAT I WANT, YOU CAN WAIT AND SEE -- ALONG WITH THE WHOLE WORLD!

HURT ME?
YOU COULDN'T HURT ME ON YOUR BEST DAY, VAN DYNE!
AND NOW THAT MY PSYCHO-KINETIC BLAST HAS FELLED YOU --
-- IT'S TIME TO DEMOLISH THE REST OF YOUR TEAM!
UHH!
THANKS, DRUID!
H-UHH!
YOU'RE SLOW, IRON MAN -- AND SLUGGISH! BUT YOU'LL FIND NO MERCY HERE!
MY INJURIES -- I CAN'T CONCENTRATE, CAN'T THINK FOR THE PAIN! BUT UNLESS I DO --
-- YOU'RE THROUGH, GOLDILOCKS!
YOUR WARRIOR'S CODE WON'T LET YOU FIGHT ALL-OUT AGAINST A FRIEND --
-- BUT I'VE GOT NO REASON TO HOLD BACK, GIANT-MAN -- NONE AT ALL!
NICE SHOT, KID! BUT I WAS SHOOTING THE CURL AT MALIBU ON SUMMER VACATIONS WHILE YOU WERE STILL IN DIAPERS!
YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME!
BUT THEY'RE HURTING US -- BADLY!
WE'VE GOT TO GET PAST THEM -- GET TO THE REAPER SOMEHOW, OR WE'RE --


-- BATTLE GOES BADLY FOR THE AVENGERS, SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL! OUR RECEPTION'S BEING INTER-FERED WITH --
-- BY SOME SORT OF ENERGY-BUBBLE, OR DOME, THAT'S SPRUNG UP AROUND THE SOUTH END OF THE PARK!
IT'S KEEPING THE AVENGERS IN, BUT IT'S PUSHING US BACK--!
WE'LL TRY TO KEEP COVERING THE EVENTS AS LONG AS WE CAN--
-- BUT IT'S GETTING HARDER AND HARDER TO SEE WHAT'S --
THSSSSSSSSH
MEGAN! MEGAN, ARE YOU THERE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
CHIL! -- LOOK OUT! THAT WALL OF ENERGY -- IT'S COMING RIGHT --
WE ARE EXPERIENCING TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES
PLEASE STAND BY
YOU'RE LAUGHING, AGATHA? BUT WHY--?
I'M SORRY, CHILD. IT JUST NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT YOU'D ASK SUCH A SIMPLE QUESTION.
HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW HOW YOU BRING SIMON TO LIFE?
YOU ARE HIS ANCHOR TO THE LIVING WORLD BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF, AND THAT LOVE HAS KEPT HIM FROM PASSING ON.
AND THUS, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO RESCUE HIM, TO BRING HIM BACK PERMANENTLY --
-- IS TO RETURN THAT LOVE.

Y-YOU MEAN ALL I HAVE TO DO--
AT LAST -- AT LAST --
-- THE AVENGERS HAVE FALLEN!
"-- IS LOVE HIM BACK--?!"
NEXT: HELL ON EARTH!

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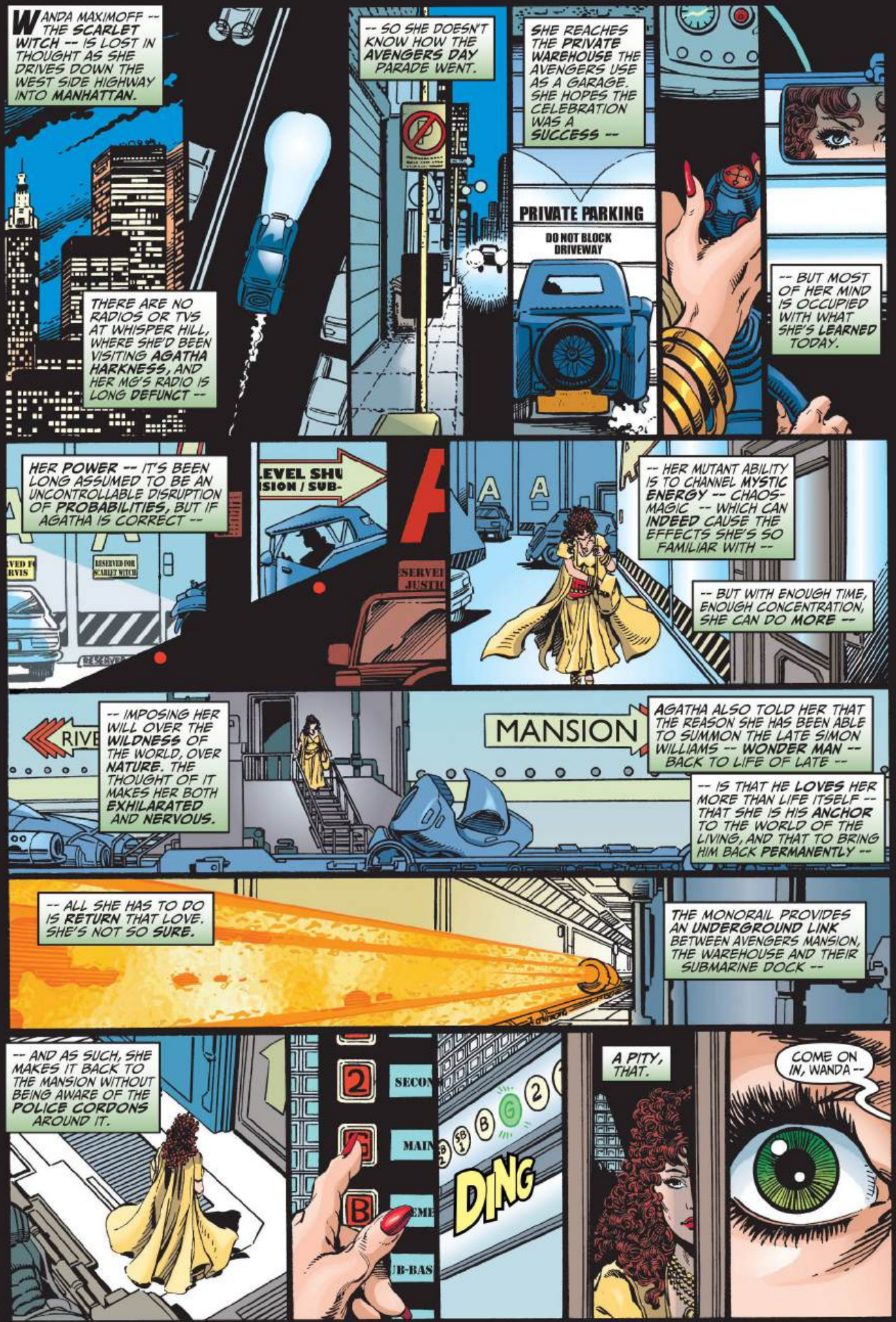

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-- WE WERE JUST GETTING STARTED!
WH-WHAT?! SIMON -- SWORDSMAN -- DR. DRUID--? BUT THIS --
MMF! MMMF!
-- THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE!
AL VEY & BOB WIACEK finishers
TOM SMITH colors
RS & COMICRAFT letters
TOM BREVOORT edits
BOB HARRAS chief
Stan Lee presents EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
...ALWAYS AN AVENGER!
by KURT BUSIEK & GEORGE PEREZ
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE -- WHO YOU REALLY ARE -- BUT THE MEN AND WOMEN YOU'RE POSING AS ARE ALL DEAD!
NOW SET JARVIS FREE, OR I'LL --
INSTINCTIVELY, HER HANDS COME UP, READY TO CAST A HEX -- BUT --
HM?
AH-AH!
SHRACK
WHAT'S THE MATTER, RED -- NOT HAPPY TO SEE YOUR OLD PAL HELLCAT?!
AAAH!
BE CAREFUL! SHE'S MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU KNOW!
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH, WONDER MAN! HOWEVER POWERFUL SHE'S BECOME SINCE OUR TIME ON EARTH --
-- SHE CAN'T USE HER POWERS IF SHE'S OFF-BALANCE!
OR BETTER YET, CAPTAIN MARVEL --
KRAK
-- UNCONSCIOUS!
MAKES -- MAKES NO SENSE --
WHAT -- HAPPENED TO-- AVENGERS--?
MY DEAR GIRL, WE ARE THE AVENGERS, OR WE ARE NOW, AT ANY RATE.
WE TOOK THIS MANSION AS OUR RIGHTFUL SPOILS.
AND AS FOR OUR PREDECESSORS, WELL...

CENTRAL PARK...
ONLY HOURS AGO, IT WAS FESTIVE AND JOYOUS, AS THRONGS OF WELL-WISHERS CROWDED IN TO WATCH THE AVENGERS DAY CEREMONIES.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE GRIM REAPER SHOWED UP.
NOW, BEHIND THE MYSTIC FORCE-WALL THAT FORCED DIGNITARIES, NEWSMEN AND ONLOOKERS ALIKE FROM ITS ENVIRONS --
-- CENTRAL PARK IS VERY DIFFERENT INDEED.
NOW THIS -- THIS FEELS GOOD.
NONE OF YOU UNDERSTAND, DO YOU? YOU PROBABLY CAN'T -- NONE OF YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE BAD SON --
-- TO NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DID!
IRON MAN'S SLUMPING SO AWKWARDLY! AND HE'S SO STILL -- I CAN'T EVEN TELL IF HE'S BREATHING! I KNOW. HE WAS BADLY INJURED --*
-- BUT I HOPE THAT'S ALL -- THAT OUR BATTLE WITH THOSE RESURRECTED AVENGERS HASN'T PUT HIM ANY WORSE OFF --
*AT THE HANDS OF THE SPYMASTER'S ESPIONAGE ELITE AND THE MANDARIN, IN IRON MAN #8-10 -- TOM

WELL, I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE! I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE BEATEN BY MY FATHER -- TO BE IGNORED, IN FAVOR OF SIMON, THE GOOD ONE!
I USED TO TRY TO LOOSEN SIMON UP -- TO SHAKE HIM OUT OF THAT GOODY-GOODY ATTITUDE! BUT IT NEVER WORKED --
"--AND I KNEW WHAT THAT SAID ABOUT ME!"
C'MON. SIMON -- THERE'S GIRLS OUT THERE IN THE NIGHT --!
ERIC-- I'VE GOT A TRIG TEST TOMORROW!
I WAS BAD -- ROTTEN FROM BIRTH! I WENT ON TO BECOME A HOODLUM -- A MOBSTER --
WILLIAMS INNOVATIONS
Simon Williams, President
"-- WHILE SIMON GOT DAD'S COMPANY! BUT EVEN WHEN HE MESSED UP -- EMBEZZLED, AND GOT CAUGHT -- EVERYONE THOUGHT I'D DONE IT!
"AND WHAT DID HE GET FOR HIS CRIME? HE GOT GIVEN SUPER-POWERS, AND DIED A HERO, SAVING THE LIVES OF THE AVENGERS!
"I GOT POWERS TOO -- TO AVENGE HIM! AND I DIED TOO, IN TIME --
SIMON WILLIAMS
ERIC WILLIAMS
"--BUT WHEN HE DIED, HE CAME BACK, CAME BACK AS A HERO, AND SERVED AS AN AVENGER! NOT ME! WHEN I DIED.
" -- I CAME BACK AS A MONSTER!
"AND AS MY SINS WEIGHTED ME DOWN FURTHER AND FURTHER, AND FURTHER, TURNING ME INTO A TWISTED MOCKERY --
"-- SIMON DIED AGAIN, AND CAME BACK -- AND CAME BACK AND CAME BACK, ALWAYS FORGIVEN, ALWAYS GETTING ANOTHER CHANCE!
"HOW I HATED HIM FOR THAT!
AND THEN, IN RECENT MONTHS, AS SIMON FLUCTUATED BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, THE FIRES OF HATRED GREW IN ME --
"-- AND I KNEW I COULD BREACH THE BARRIERS HE'D WEAKENED --

"-- BREACH THEM MYSELF -- AND BRING AT LEAST THE ESSENCES OF OTHERS ALONG WITH ME!
YOUR STORIES... ARE WARPED, REAPER...
I KNEW THEN THAT I COULD BRING THE HELL I'D SUFFERED ALL MY LIFE TO EARTH -- AND I DID!

SIMON WAS NEVER... THE FAVORED ONE! HE'S TOLD US...
...HOW HE ALWAYS FELT... UNWORTHY... FELT THAT HE HAD... TO PROVE HIMSELF... BUT NEVER COULD!

SHUT UP, VISION!
TO THINK! I ONCE THOUGHT OF YOU AS MY BROTHER, TOO -- JUST BECAUSE YOUR ANDROID MIND HAS SIMON'S BRAIN-PATTERNS!
SIMON HAD IT ALL -- AND I HAD NOTHING! AND YOU KNOW IT! AND NOW --

-- NOW YOUR YAPPING HOLOGRAM FORM ISN'T ANY MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN SIMON'S ON-AGAIN/OFF-AGAIN ENERGY FORM --
KSSH

VTTT

-- AND IT'S MY TIME!
I CAN'T HOLD IT IN ANY LONGER! CAN'T SUFFER MY PAIN WHILE HE GETS EVERYTHING -- ALL THE SECOND CHANCES! I'VE GOT TO SHARE IT!
AND I WILL! MY LITTLE REALM -- MY HELL ON EARTH-- IT'S SMALL, AT THE MOMENT, BUT THE WORLD IS WATCHING AS THEIR HEROES LIE HELPLESS --
-- AND THEY'LL DESPAIR, AS I HAVE!

AND THE MORE PEOPLE DESPAIR THE MORE THAT WILL FEED ME, AND THE LARGER MY HELL ON EARTH WILL GET --
-- AND THE WORLD WILL SHARE MY PAIN -- THE WORLD WILL DROWN IN IT --!

THE WORLD WATCHES IN HORROR TODAY, CHILI -- FEARING THAT THE AVENGERS, SO RECENTLY RESTORED TO THEM, WILL BE LOST AGAIN --
BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE, STUNT-MASTER -- AS NEW YORK'S OTHER HEROES TRY TO BREAK IN AND FREE THE AVENGERS --!
FROOSH
KWOM
BTAMM
EVEN NOVA-BURSTS DON'T GET THROUGH!
AND THIS PROTONIC CANNON -- IT'S NOT HAVING ANY MORE EFFECT THAN ANY OF THE OTHER WEAPONS I'VE TRIED!
JUST KEEP IT UP -- WE AIN'T LICKED YET!
I THOUGHT -- IF IT'S A FORCE-FIELD, MAYBE I COULD PROJECT MY OWN FORCE-FIELD INTO IT -- SHUT IT DOWN --
THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY IN, DAREDEVIL -- SOME KIND OF WEAK SPOT!
I CAN'T SENSE ANYTHING, SPIDEY --
-- JUST SMOOTH, ENDLESS FORCE!
-- BUT MY POWER JUST -- SPLASHES AGAINST IT --!
MEGAN McLAREN FOR CHANNEL 3, MISTER FANTASTIC! DO YOU HAVE AN ESTIMATE OF WHEN THE AVENGERS WILL BE FREED?
I...DON'T KNOW! WE'VE THROWN EVERYTHING IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S ARSENAL AT IT -- AND I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO TRY!
AND AT REED RICHARDS' WORDS, A SHUDDER GOES THROUGH THE WATCHING CROWD. SOME OF THEM GIVE IN TO DESPAIR --
-- AND THE FORCE-WALL PUSHES OUTWARD --
MEANWHILE, AT AVENGERS MANSION...

THEY'VE BEEN VERY SPECIFIC.

THEY'VE TOLD HER HOW THE GRIM REAPER LOOSED THEM -- HOW THEY'RE BRINGING HIS PAIN -- HIS DESPAIR -- TO THE WORLD.

THEY'VE TOLD HER HOW THEY'LL MURDER MILLIONS, RAVAGE CITIES, DESTROY MONUMENTS --

-- BUT THAT FIRST, SHE'LL DIE AT THEIR HANDS -- AND THAT THEY'LL DISPLAY HER FLAYED, BROKEN BODY TO THE CROWDS OUTSIDE.

AND SHE'S SAID NOTHING.

SHE KNOWS THESE MEN AND WOMEN. SHE WORKED WITH THEM, WHEN THEY WERE ALIVE.

SHE GRIEVED FOR THEM WHEN THEY DIED.

CAPTAIN MAR-VELL OF THE KREE -- DEAD OF CANCER AFTER A LIFETIME OF HEROISM.

YOU LIVED, WITCH -- YOU LIVED WHEN WE DIED!

YOU GOT THE GLORY -- AND ALL WE GOT WAS A COLD GRAVE!

THE SWORDSMAN -- LAID DOWN HIS LIFE TO SAVE THE WOMAN HE LOVED.

DR. DRUID -- MURDERED, HIS BODY BURNED ALMOST BEYOND RECOGNITION.

WELL, WE'RE TAKING BACK WHAT WE'VE EARNED -- WHAT YOU'VE HAD!

WE'RE TAKING OUR SHARE -- OUR RIGHT!

HELLCAT -- AN APPARENT SUICIDE, AFTER BEING DRIVEN MAD BY HER DEMONIC HUSBAND.

MOCKINGBIRD -- DIED SAVING HER HUSBAND FROM THE DREAD MEPHISTO.

THE WORLD WILL KNOW OUR PAIN, WANDA MAXIMOFF --

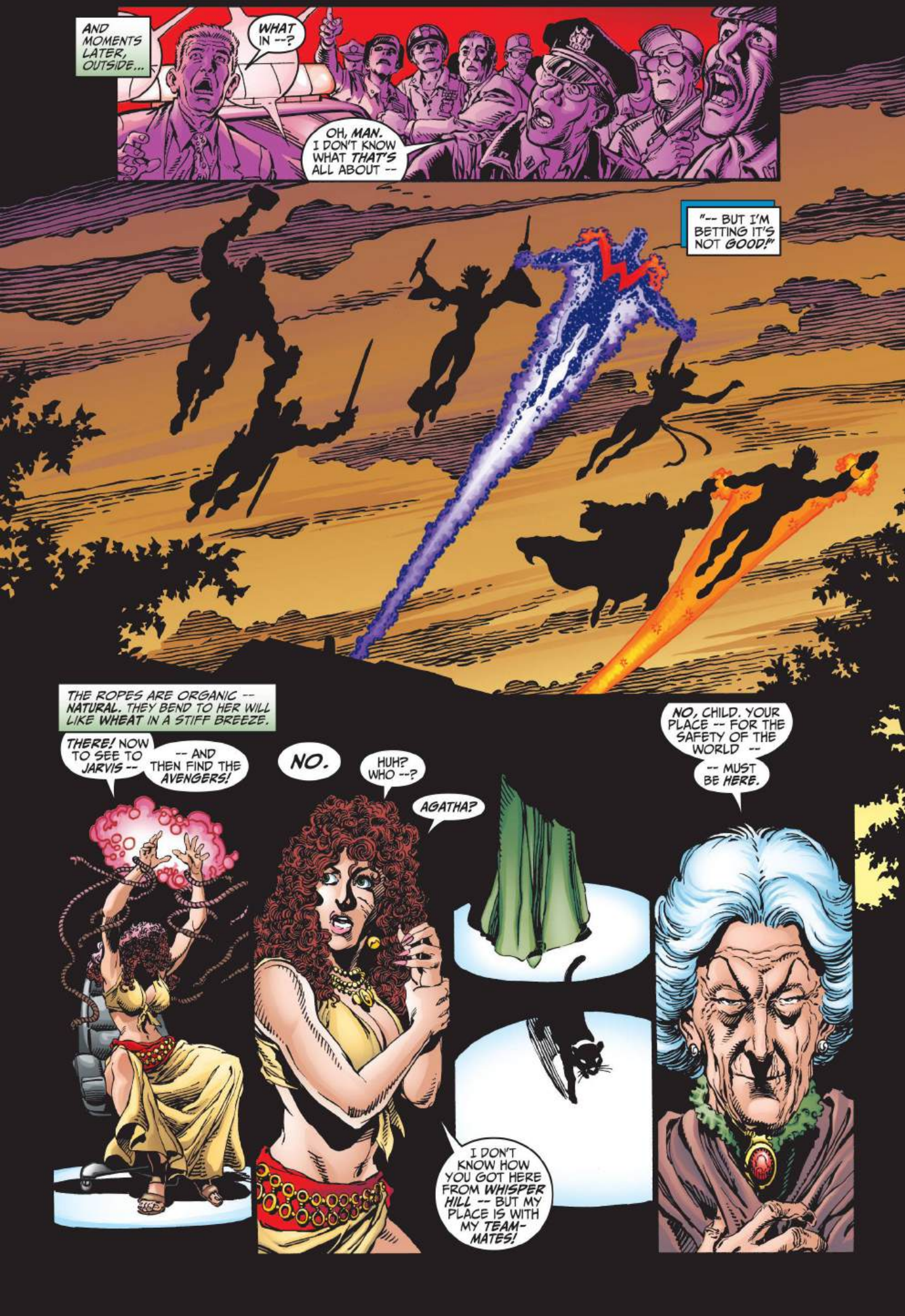
THEY'LL KNOW OUR PAIN -- AND DESPAIR!

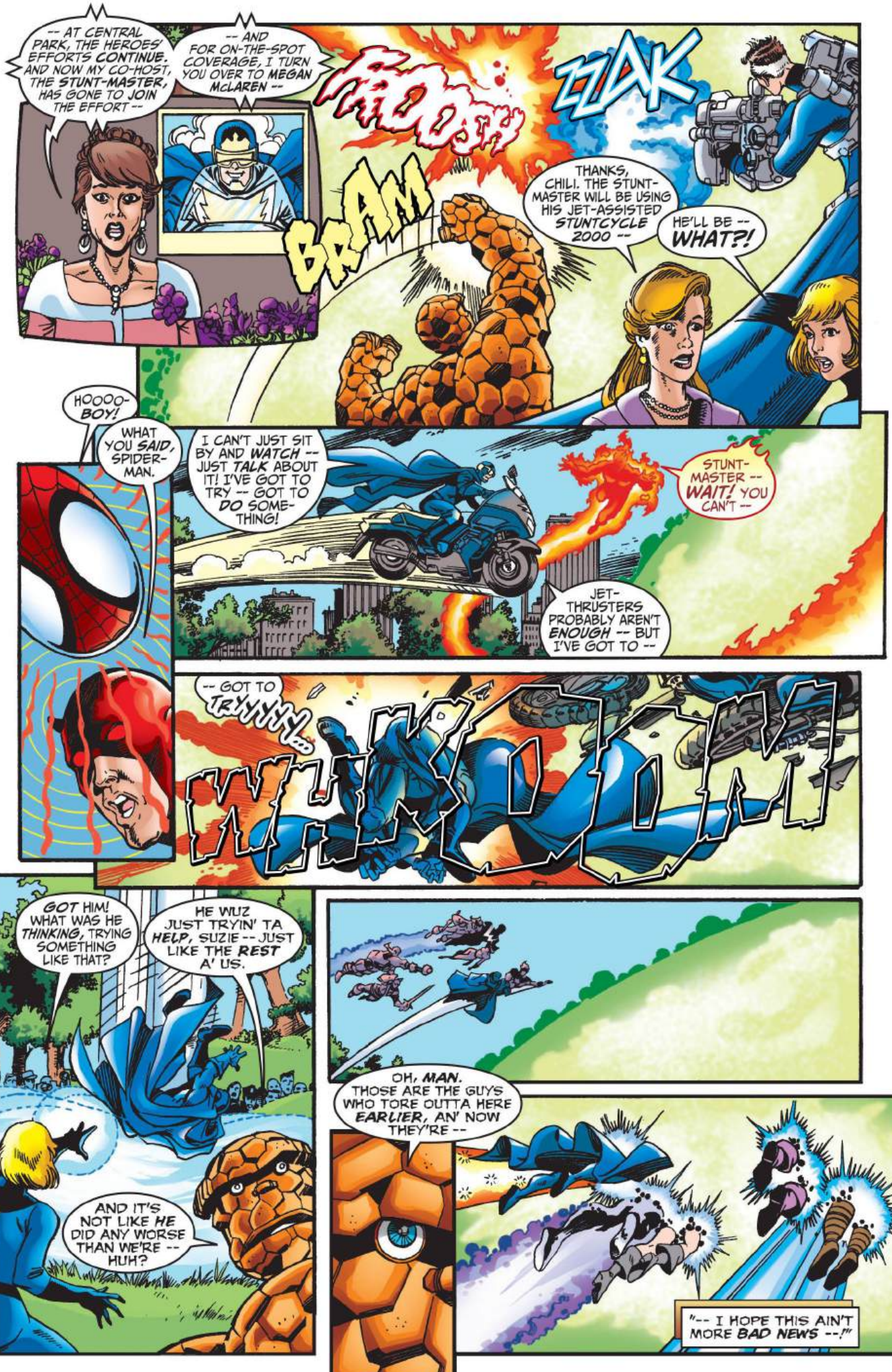
THUNDERSTRIKE -- SACRIFICED HIMSELF TO CONTAIN THE EVIL OF THE ASGARDIAN BLOOD-AXE.

AND WONDER MAN -- DIED PREVENTING AN ALIEN INVASION OF EARTH.

SHE LOOKS AT WONDER MAN, STANDING SILENT, APART FROM THE OTHERS -- AND REMEMBERS HIS KINDNESS, HIS DEVOTION THESE PAST MONTHS.
AND SHE THINKS ABOUT WHAT AGATHA SAID -- NOT ABOUT LOVING HIM, WHICH JUST SEEMS FOOLISH --
-- BUT ABOUT HER POWERS, AND HOW THEY WORK -- HOW IF SHE CONCENTRATES, SHE CAN DIRECT NATURE.
AND SHE CONCENTRATES.
AND SHE FEELS THE POWER SEETHING WITHIN HER, BUT SHE DOESN'T RELEASE IT.
WHAT --
SOME-THING --
MY HEAD --
-- MY HEART --
AND SHE CONCENTRATES.
WHAT --?
SOMETHING -- SOMETHING WRONG --
NO --
-- SOMETHING RIGHT --
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, WANDA? WHAT?!
WHATEVER IT IS -- IT WON'T WORK!
OH, WON'T IT?

YOU'RE NOT YOURSELVES, ANY OF YOU! THE THINGS YOU'RE SAYING -- THEY'RE NOT COMING FROM THE AVENGERS I KNEW --
-- BUT FROM THE GRIM REAPER!
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DONE -- BUT I CAN FEEL IT! HE'S CREATED BODIES FOR YOU -- BROUGHT BACK YOUR SPIRITS --
-- BUT THEY'RE ALL TANGLED UP, ALL KNOTTED WITH HIS ANGER AND PAIN!
WELL, I DON'T CARE WHAT HE'S DONE TO YOU -- I KNOW THE TRUTH! DEEP DOWN, EACH OF YOU -- ALL OF YOU -- ARE AVENGERS AT YOUR CORES!
AND I'M GOING TO REACH THOSE CORES! I'M GOING TO BREAK YOU THROUGH TO YOURSELVES!
NO!
YOU WERE A TOOL -- A DUPE! MY RESURRECTIONS WEREN'T YOUR DOING -- THEY WERE ERIC ALL ALONG, JUST TO SUCKER YOU IN!
I'LL KILL YOU -- KNOCK YOUR HEAD CLEAN OFF!
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO, SIMON -- I CAN'T STOP YOU. GO AHEAD -- KILL ME.
IF YOU'RE REALLY THE REAPER'S CREATURE -- IF EVERYTHING YOU'VE SAID AND DONE SINCE I BROUGHT YOU BACK WAS JUST A SHAM --
-- THEN YOU'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE DOING IT.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, SIMON? KILL ME IF YOU CAN.
WELL?

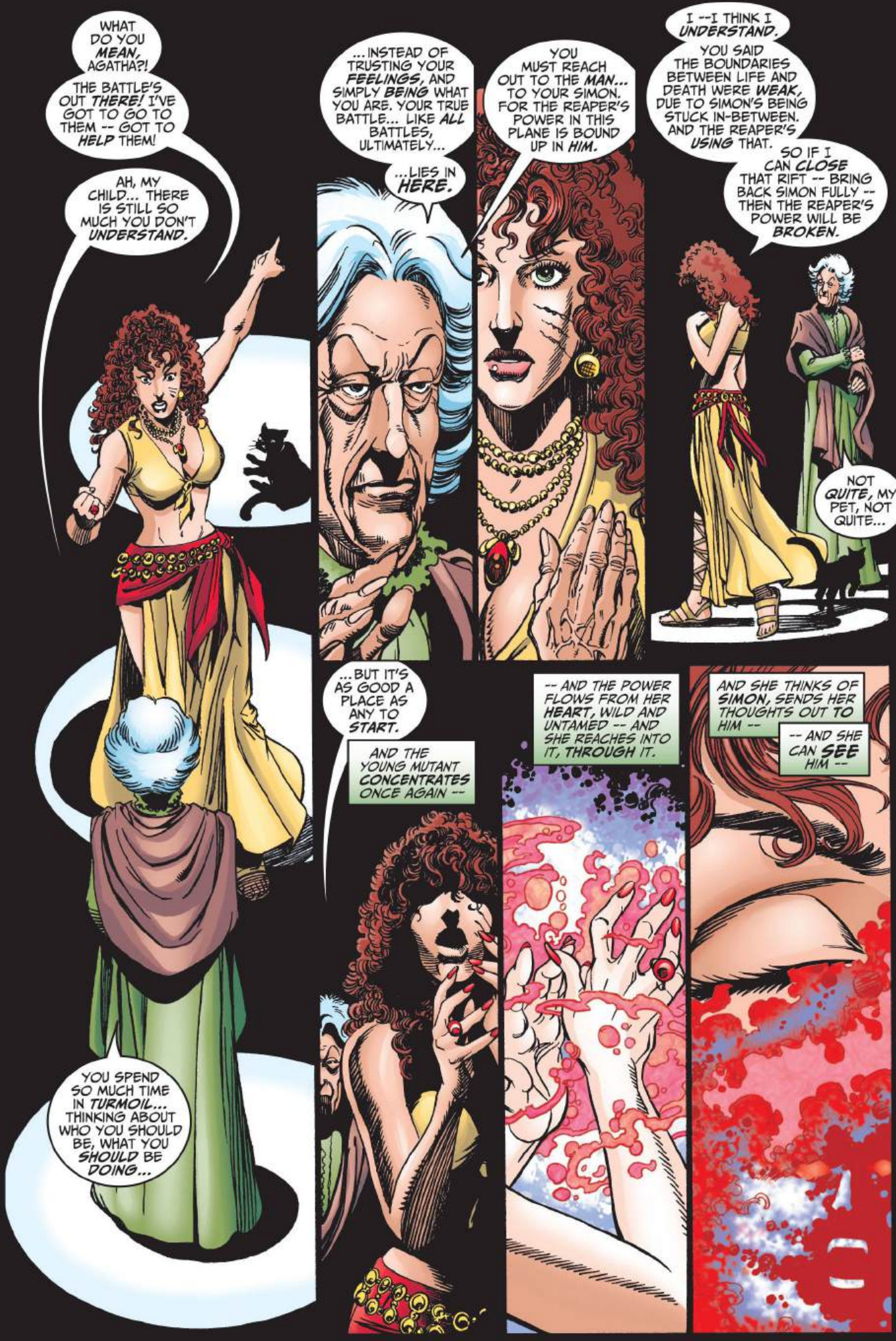

AND MOMENTS LATER, OUTSIDE...
WHAT IN --?
OH, MAN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT'S ALL ABOUT --
"-- BUT I'M BETTING IT'S NOT GOOD!"
THE ROPES ARE ORGANIC -- NATURAL. THEY BEND TO HER WILL LIKE WHEAT IN A STIFF BREEZE.
THERE! NOW TO SEE TO JARVIS --
-- AND THEN FIND THE AVENGERS!
NO.
HUH? WHO --?
AGATHA?
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT HERE FROM WHISPER HILL -- BUT MY PLACE IS WITH MY TEAM-MATES!
NO, CHILD. YOUR PLACE -- FOR THE SAFETY OF THE WORLD --
-- MUST BE HERE.

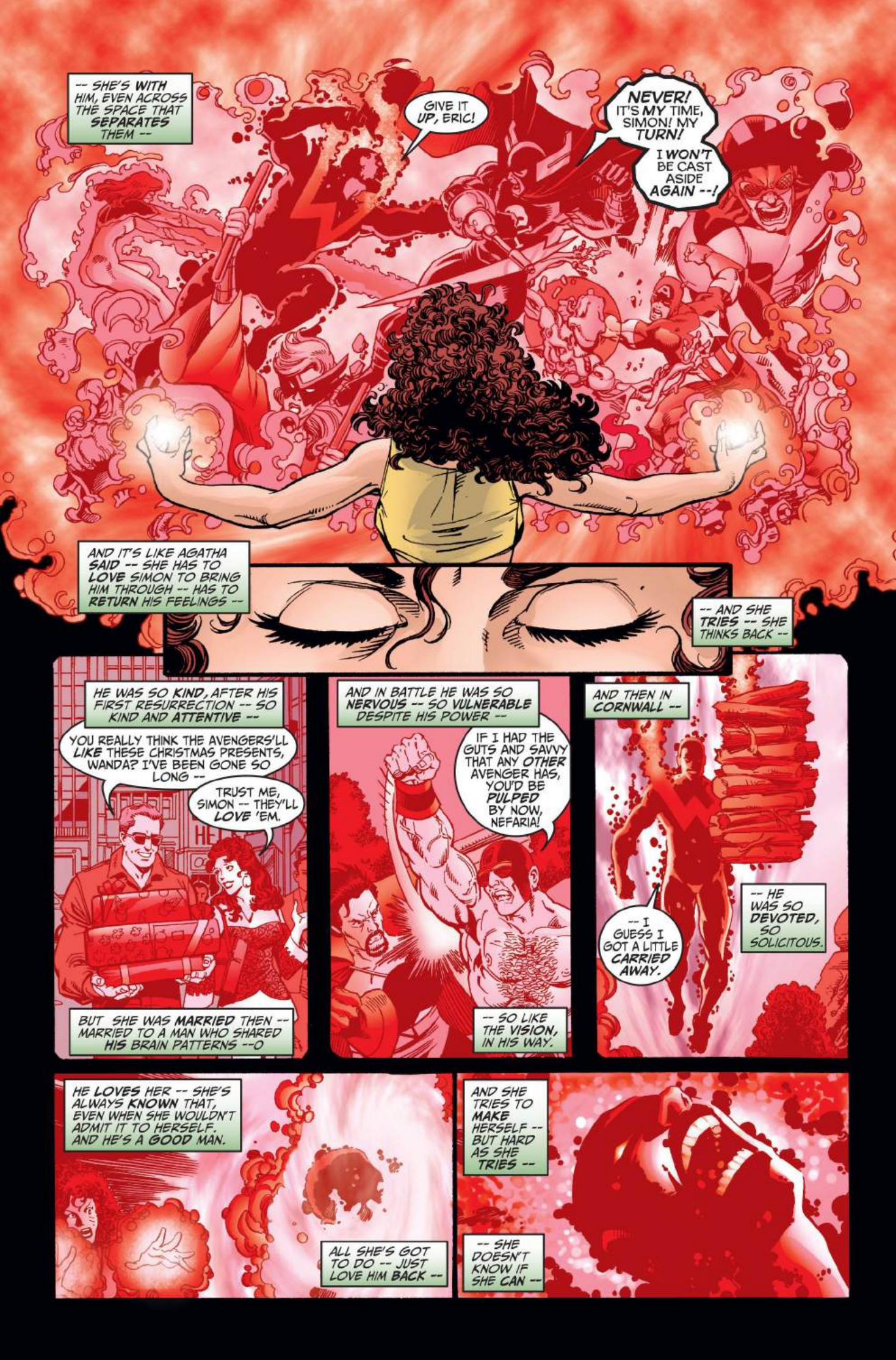

-- AT CENTRAL PARK, THE HEROES' EFFORTS CONTINUE. AND NOW MY CO-HOST, THE STUNT-MASTER, HAS GONE TO JOIN THE EFFORT --
-- AND FOR ON-THE-SPOT COVERAGE, I TURN YOU OVER TO MEGAN McLAREN --
FOOF
ZAK
BRAM
THANKS, CHILI. THE STUNT-MASTER WILL BE USING HIS JET-ASSISTED STUNTCYCLE 2000 --
HE'LL BE -- WHAT?!
HOOOO-BOY!
WHAT YOU SAID, SPIDER-MAN.
I CAN'T JUST SIT BY AND WATCH -- JUST TALK ABOUT IT! I'VE GOT TO TRY -- GOT TO DO SOME-THING!
STUNT-MASTER -- WAIT! YOU CAN'T --
JET-THRUSTERS PROBABLY AREN'T ENOUGH -- BUT I'VE GOT TO --
-- GOT TO TRYYYYY...
WHOOM
GOT HIM! WHAT WAS HE THINKING, TRYING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
HE WUZ JUST TRYIN' TA HELP, SUZIE -- JUST LIKE THE REST A' US.
AND IT'S NOT LIKE HE DID ANY WORSE THAN WE'RE -- HUH?
OH, MAN. THOSE ARE THE GUYS WHO TORE OUTTA HERE EARLIER, AN' NOW THEY'RE --
"-- I HOPE THIS AIN'T MORE BAD NEWS --!"

ERIC!
AH, YOU'RE BACK! DID YOU DESTROY AVENGERS MANSION?
DID YOU DESTROY THE U.N.? QUICKLY -- TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE --
--HUH?
WHY TELL YOU, REAPER --
-- WHEN IT'S MUCH EASIER TO SHOW YOU WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR?
SHRAMM
KTTSH
SHKK
SHKK
HUH?
SHRKK
KTEK
YOU MADE ONE MISTAKE, ERIC. I'M SURE YOU THOUGHT IT POETIC TO USE US AS YOUR PUPPETS --
-- BUT WE'RE AVENGERS.

"AND AVENGERS WILL OPPOSE YOU --
"TO THE BITTER END --
"-- AND BEYOND."
NOW SURRENDER, ERIC. YOU ONLY STARTED BEING THE GRIM REAPER BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT I WAS DEAD -- THAT THE AVENGERS KILLED ME.
BUT THOSE TIMES ARE OVER -- WE BOTH KNOW THAT. LET US HELP YOU -- LET'S PUT AN END TO ALL THIS ENMITY.
NO!
THIS ISN'T GOING TO TURN INTO ONE OF YOUR TRIUMPHS! NOT ANOTHER CHANCE FOR SIMON TO PLAY THE HERO AND ERIC TO PLAY THE HEAVY!
NO MORE SECOND CHANCES! NO MORE COMEBACKS! YOU'VE GOT TO SUFFER AS I HAVE -- AND YOU WILL!
AS LONG AS I CAN STILL REND THE FABRIC BETWEEN REALMS --
-- AND BRING THROUGH THE DENIZENS OF THE OTHER SIDE!
YOU HAVE NO HOPE, AVENGERS! NO HOPE AT ALL! I CAN BRING THROUGH AS MANY AS IT TAKES --
"-- AS MANY AS IT TAKES TO SLAY YOU ALL!"

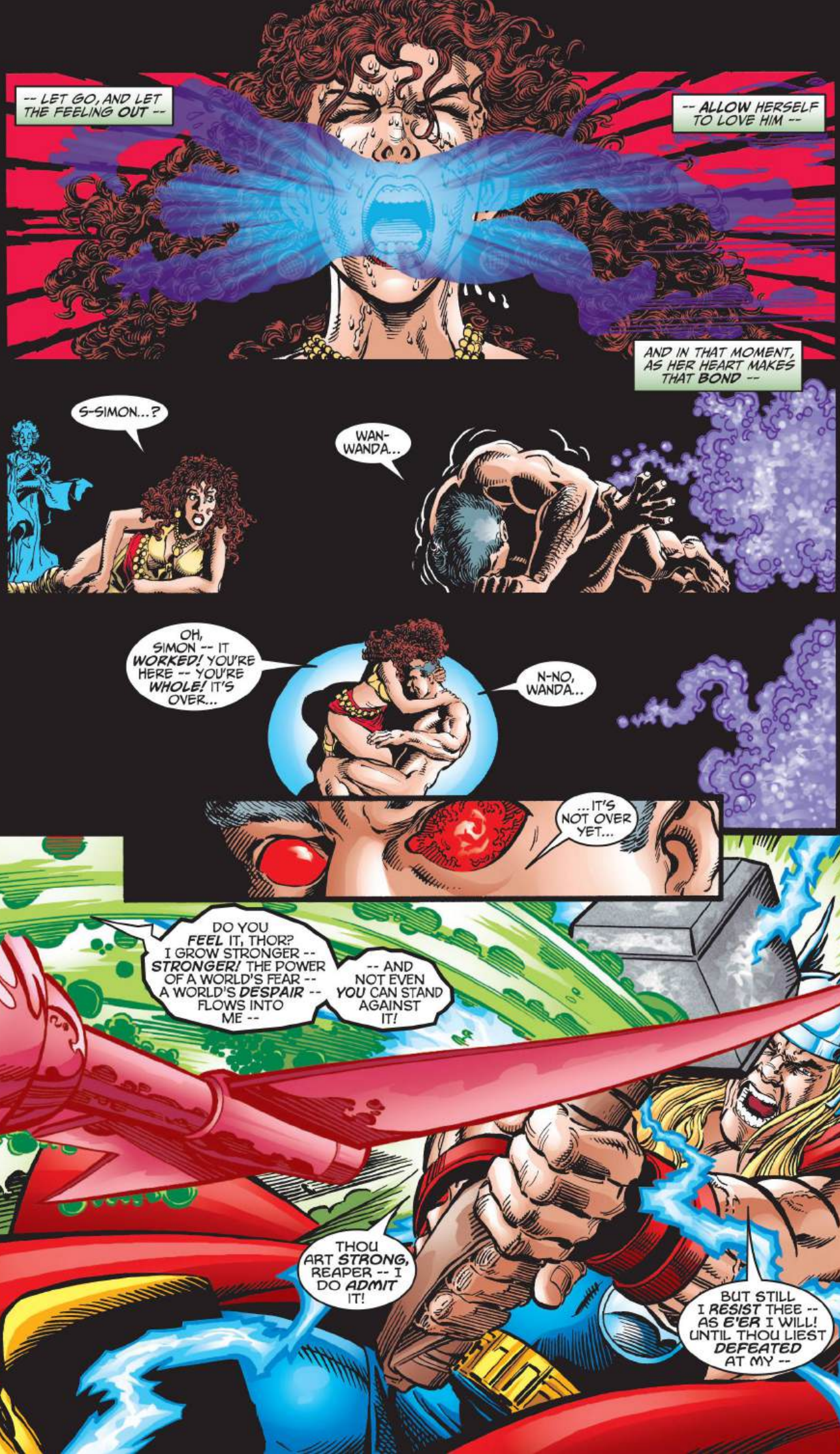
YOU'RE WRONG, REAPER! THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE!
HE IS CORRECT, MADMAN!
THE AVENGERS STAND FOR THAT HOPE -- FIGHT FOR THAT HOPE --
-- AND THEY NEVER -- NEVER -- GIVE UP!
AH-AH! SORRY... CHUCKLES... BUT IT'S NOT... THAT EASY...
IRON MAN -- HE CAN'T EVEN STAND! BUT HE'S STILL FIGHTING -- WITH EVERYTHING HE'S GOT --!
THUNDERSTRIKE -- MOCKINGBIRD -- ALL OF THEM! THEY DIED -- THEY MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE -- BUT NOW, THEY'RE --
YEAH, VANCE -- THEY ARE.
YOU KNOW -- I THINK I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU SEE IN THESE GUYS --!

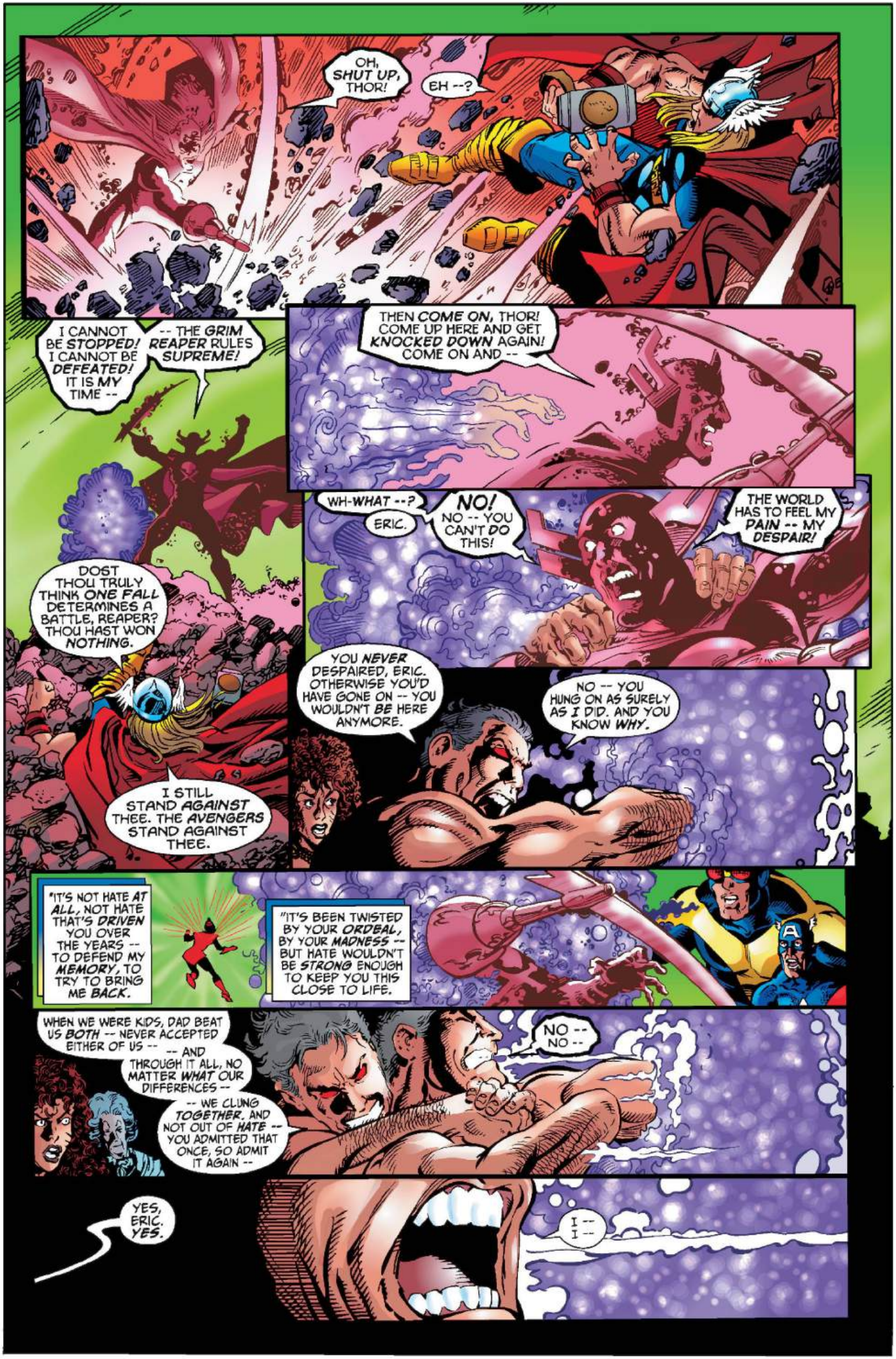

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, AGATHA?!
THE BATTLE'S OUT THERE! I'VE GOT TO GO TO THEM -- GOT TO HELP THEM!
AH, MY CHILD... THERE IS STILL SO MUCH YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU SPEND SO MUCH TIME IN TURMOIL... THINKING ABOUT WHO YOU SHOULD BE, WHAT YOU SHOULD BE DOING...
...INSTEAD OF TRUSTING YOUR FEELINGS, AND SIMPLY BEING WHAT YOU ARE. YOUR TRUE BATTLE... LIKE ALL BATTLES, ULTIMATELY...
...LIES IN HERE.
YOU MUST REACH OUT TO THE MAN... TO YOUR SIMON. FOR THE REAPER'S POWER IN THIS PLANE IS BOUND UP IN HIM.
...BUT IT'S AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO START.
AND THE YOUNG MUTANT CONCENTRATES ONCE AGAIN --
-- AND THE POWER FLOWS FROM HER HEART, WILD AND UNTAMED -- AND SHE REACHES INTO IT, THROUGH IT.
I --I THINK I UNDERSTAND.
YOU SAID THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH WERE WEAK, DUE TO SIMON'S BEING STUCK IN-BETWEEN. AND THE REAPER'S USING THAT.
SO IF I CAN CLOSE THAT RIFT -- BRING BACK SIMON FULLY -- THEN THE REAPER'S POWER WILL BE BROKEN.
NOT QUITE, MY PET, NOT QUITE...
AND SHE THINKS OF SIMON, SENDS HER THOUGHTS OUT TO HIM --
-- AND SHE CAN SEE HIM --


-- SHE'S WITH HIM, EVEN ACROSS THE SPACE THAT SEPARATES THEM --
GIVE IT UP, ERIC!
NEVER! IT'S MY TIME, SIMON! MY TURN!
I WON'T BE CAST ASIDE AGAIN --!
AND IT'S LIKE AGATHA SAID -- SHE HAS TO LOVE SIMON TO BRING HIM THROUGH -- HAS TO RETURN HIS FEELINGS --
-- AND SHE TRIES -- SHE THINKS BACK --
HE WAS SO KIND, AFTER HIS FIRST RESURRECTION -- SO KIND AND ATTENTIVE --
YOU REALLY THINK THE AVENGERS'LL LIKE THESE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, WANDA? I'VE BEEN GONE SO LONG --
TRUST ME, SIMON -- THEY'LL LOVE 'EM.
BUT SHE WAS MARRIED THEN -- MARRIED TO A MAN WHO SHARED HIS BRAIN PATTERNS --O
AND IN BATTLE HE WAS SO NERVOUS -- SO VULNERABLE DESPITE HIS POWER --
IF I HAD THE GUTS AND SAVVY THAT ANY OTHER AVENGER HAS, YOU'D BE PULPED BY NOW, NEFARIA!
-- SO LIKE THE VISION, IN HIS WAY.
AND THEN IN CORNWALL --
-- I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY.
-- HE WAS SO DEVOTED, SO SOLICITOUS.
HE LOVES HER -- SHE'S ALWAYS KNOWN THAT, EVEN WHEN SHE WOULDN'T ADMIT IT TO HERSELF. AND HE'S A GOOD MAN.
ALL SHE'S GOT TO DO -- JUST LOVE HIM BACK --
AND SHE TRIES TO MAKE HERSELF -- BUT HARD AS SHE TRIES --
-- SHE DOESN'T KNOW IF SHE CAN --

AND IN CENTRAL PARK --
WHAT? SIMON? YOU'RE -- -- AH. I FEEL IT NOW -- FEEL WHAT'S HAPPENING. IT'S YOUR GYPSY -- YOUR SCARLET WITCH --
-- AND SHE'S JUST DOOMED YOU ALL!
I FEEL -- SO STRANGE! WHAT'S -- GOING ON?
SHE'S TRYING TO PULL SIMON BACK -- TO BREAK HIS LINK TO THE WORLD OF THE DEAD! BUT HE'S THE DOORWAY FOR THE OTHERS -- HE'S THE KEY --
-- SO SHE'S JUST COST YOU HALF YOUR STRENGTH!
THOR!
MASTERSON --?
CHECK ON MY KID, WILL YOU? MAKE SURE HE'S OKAY -- TELL HIM I LOVE...
HELLCAT!
I'M -- I'M GOING BACK --
I NEVER REALIZED... I'D MISS LIFE SO MUCH...
I THOUGHT -- I THOUGHT THERE'D BE MORE TIME!
AVENGERS -- YOU'VE GOT TO REACH HAWKEYE FOR ME!
TELL HIM THAT HE -- THAT HE --
TELL HIM WHAT, BOBBI? WHAT?
TELL HIM HE'S GOT TO --
CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SWORDSMAN...
THEY'RE GONE -- ALL GONE --!

BUT I'M HERE! I'M STILL HERE!
THE OTHERS -- THEY HAD NO ANCHOR, ONCE THEIR GATEWAY WAS GONE! BUT I'M STILL LINKED TO SIMON -- BY MY HATRED, BY MY PAIN --
-- AND THAT MEANS I'VE WON!
I'VE WON!
I SAY THEE NAY REAPER!
THOSE HEROES YOU DID USE -- THOSE MEMORIES YOU DID DESPOIL -- THEY WERE OUR COMRADES! OUR BRETHREN!
AND FOR THAT, FOUL ONE, I SWEAR TO THEE --
WHOA.
-- THERE WILL BE A RECKONING!
KROOM
THAT'S OUR THOR, JUSTICE. HE GETS MAD REAL GOOD, DOESN'T HE?
SHE CONCENTRATES -- EVERY MUSCLE CLENCHED, HER HEAD POUNDING --
-- BUT SHE CAN'T BRING HIM ANY FURTHER -- CAN'T BRING HIM THROUGH.
RELAX, CHILD. STOP TORMENTING YOURSELF...
BUT -- BUT IF I LET UP -- I'LL LOSE HIM --
AND THEN SHE SEES IT -- REALIZES HER MISTAKE. SHE CANNOT FORCE HERSELF TO LOVE -- HIM, OR ANYONE.
BUT DEEP WITHIN HER, SHE HAS ALWAYS RETURNED HIS FEELINGS, ALWAYS BEEN ATTRACTED TO HIS SHY SMILE, HIS EMBARASSED CHUCKLES.
BUT SHE DENIED THE FEELINGS -- WALLED THEM OFF. SHE WAS MARRIED, AFTER ALL --
-- AND AFTER THAT WAS OVER, HE WAS TOO LIKE THE VISION IN HIS TENTATIVENESS, HIS MASKED VULNERABILITY.
SHE CAN'T FORCE LOVE. CAN'T PUSH IT. SHE HAS TO LET GO --


-- LET GO, AND LET THE FEELING OUT --
-- ALLOW HERSELF TO LOVE HIM --
AND IN THAT MOMENT, AS HER HEART MAKES THAT BOND --
S-SIMON...?
WAN- WANDA...
OH, SIMON -- IT WORKED! YOU'RE HERE -- YOU'RE WHOLE! IT'S OVER...
N-NO, WANDA...
...IT'S NOT OVER YET...
DO YOU FEEL IT, THOR? I GROW STRONGER -- STRONGER! THE POWER OF A WORLD'S FEAR -- A WORLD'S DESPAIR -- FLOWS INTO ME --
-- AND NOT EVEN YOU CAN STAND AGAINST IT!
THOU ART STRONG, REAPER -- I DO ADMIT IT!
BUT STILL I RESIST THEE -- AS E'ER I WILL! UNTIL THOU LIEST DEFEATED AT MY --


OH, SHUT UP, THOR!
EH --?
I CANNOT BE STOPPED! I CANNOT BE DEFEATED! IT IS MY TIME --
-- THE GRIM REAPER RULES SUPREME!
THEN COME ON, THOR! COME UP HERE AND GET KNOCKED DOWN AGAIN! COME ON AND --
WH-WHAT --?
ERIC.
NO! NO -- YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
THE WORLD HAS TO FEEL MY PAIN -- MY DESPAIR!
DOST THOU TRULY THINK ONE FALL DETERMINES A BATTLE, REAPER? THOU HAST WON NOTHING.
I STILL STAND AGAINST THEE. THE AVENGERS STAND AGAINST THEE.
YOU NEVER DESPAIRED, ERIC. OTHERWISE YOU'D HAVE GONE ON -- YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE ANYMORE.
NO -- YOU HUNG ON AS SURELY AS I DID. AND YOU KNOW WHY.
"IT'S NOT HATE AT ALL, NOT HATE THAT'S DRIVEN YOU OVER THE YEARS -- TO DEFEND MY MEMORY, TO TRY TO BRING ME BACK.
"IT'S BEEN TWISTED BY YOUR ORDEAL, BY YOUR MADNESS -- BUT HATE WOULDN'T BE STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU THIS CLOSE TO LIFE.
WHEN WE WERE KIDS, DAD BEAT US BOTH -- NEVER ACCEPTED EITHER OF US --
-- AND THROUGH IT ALL, NO MATTER WHAT OUR DIFFERENCES --
-- WE CLUNG TOGETHER, AND NOT OUT OF HATE -- YOU ADMITTED THAT ONCE, SO ADMIT IT AGAIN --
NO -- NO --
YES, ERIC. YES.
I -- I --

THAT IS MOST GOOD TO HEAR. I THANK THEE, DR. FOSTER.
IRON MAN DOTH REST COMFORTABLY. HIS INJURIES ARE SEVERE, I AM TOLD -- BUT WITH PROPER REST, HE SHALL RECOVER FULLY.
OH, I'M SO RELIEVED, THOR -- I'D BEEN FEARING THE WORST. THEN THAT'S IT -- EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT AGAIN?
PRETTY MUCH, JARVIS.
AS SOON AS THE REAPER STOPPED STRUGGLING, AND WONDER MAN PULLED HIM THROUGH, ALL THAT HELLISH LANDSCAPE VANISHED.
WE GOT IRON MAN TO MEDICAL ATTENTION, AND ANSWERED REPORTERS' QUESTIONS --
-- WELL, ANSWERED AS WELL AS WE COULD, CONSIDERING --
BUT -- HOW COULD THE GRIM REAPER'S LOVE FOR HIS BROTHER TWIST HIM LIKE THAT -- TURN TO SUCH VIOLENT HATRED?
ERIC APPARENTLY ALWAYS SAW SIMON AS HIS GOOD SELF -- AS IF THEY WERE LINKED, AND SIMON'S GOOD DEEDS MADE UP FOR ERIC'S CRIMES.
WHEN SIMON DIED, ERIC BECAME THE REAPER TO AVENGE HIM -- AND WHEN SIMON CAME BACK, THEY WERE OPPOSED. THE LINK WAS GONE.
WITHOUT A "GOOD SELF" TO CLING TO, ERIC BECAME MORE AND MORE IRRATIONAL AND SELF-HATING, HIS LOVE CURDLING INTO JEALOUSY.
BUT HE'LL GET THAT SECOND CHANCE HE WANTED. HE'S IN CUSTODY, BUT HE'LL WIND UP IN AN ASYLUM, NOT IN JAIL.
AND ERIC WILLIAMS ISN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS A SECOND CHANCE, FOLKS. TAKE A LOOK IN THE LIVING ROOM.
WELL, WELL. THAT'S SOMETHING TO SEE, ISN'T IT?
"THAT'S SOMETHING."
NEXT: THE THUNDERBOLTS (AND A WHOLE LOT MORE!)

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